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WWF RAW

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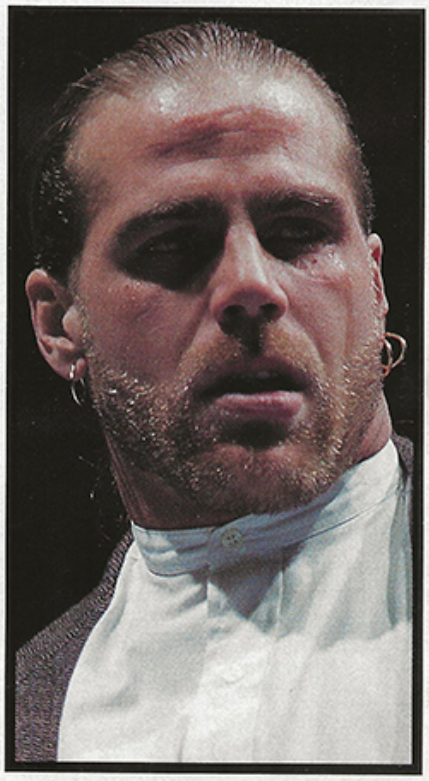

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- **Editor-in-Chief** Vince Russo
- **Technical Advisor** Howard Finkel
- **Production Manager** Brad Sagendorf
- **Copy Editor** Janet Simms
- **Field Editor** Keith Elliot Greenberg
- **Staff Photographer** Tom Buchanan
- **Senior Photo Editor** Noah Wilker
- **Art Director** Michael Woodside
- **Vice President, Sales** James A. Rothschild
- **Advertising Director** Craig Cassanelli
- **Acct. Dev. Coordinator** Lisa Fox

1241 East Main Street
Stamford, CT 06902
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The gospel according to the walking blue light special... or so he would want you to believe!

5 Federation Challenge Game
Take on a Federation Superstar. If you emerge victorious, you'll win a prize!

6 The Ross Report
Jim Ross has all the news and behind the scenes info on Federation happenings!

7 French/Canadian Report with Ray Rougeau
The latest Federation news from the Great White North!

8 Post Match Interviews
During every Federation pay-per-view event, hear comments from the winners and losers of the matches that take place!

Letters to the Editor:

Hey, these things are comfortable... and leakproof, too!

Letter

Dear Editor,

First of all, I'd like to say that the *RAW Magazine* is fabulous. The articles by yourself, Vic Venom, Keith Elliott Greenberg and Bill Banks really stand out. Also, "The Night The Belt Changed Hands" have great accounts of legendary matches, rekindling amazing memories of great athletes. Keep up the good work. The reason I wrote this is to say that the Federation is REALLY starting to go full steam ahead with the new year. The Federation scene today is much more diverse than only a few months ago, and it's so much better than that "Depends" commercial called the WCW title scene. I'm tired of seeing two doddering grandfathers battle for a title every month! Like Ross said, at least Shawn and Bret have all their original body parts!

Mustafa Mirza
Charleston, SC

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Fax

Dear Editor,

Since I started surfing around the WEB a few years ago, I have really had a chance to see how the world of wrestling has evolved online. I'm met hundreds of great wrestling fans who love our sport and have found a place to talk about it. HOWEVER, I've also met 10 times that many people who "claim" to have inside knowledge of the wrestling industry. I can't tell you how sick and tired I am of reading rumors from a bunch of 10-year-olds who say the Undertaker has been 10 different people in his career. It's time for these people to turn off the modem, go outside and reintroduce themselves to that big ball of heat up in the sky!

Chick Orlando
Jackson, MS

The bigger they are... the better they are!

Letter

Dear Editor,

I recently had the pleasure of watching the 1997 *Royal Rumble* in the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. What a show! The one thing that really added to the huge event was the crowd of 60,000-plus fans inside the arena that night. However, why can't the World Wrestling Federation book *WrestleMania* at a huge arena like that? Not since the Hoosier Dome have such a huge amount of fans filled *WrestleMania* to the rafters! The Federation should consider Giants Stadium, the Skydome, the Superdome, the Rose Bowl or even go back to the Pontiac Silverdome! I could only imagine how great it would look on Pay-Per-View!

Ez Hsiang
Riverhead, NY

Rock 'n' Wrestling II?

EMail

Dear Editor,

Bravo to the World Wrestling Federation for allowing the recent appearances of Stone Cold Steve Austin, Bob Backlund and Sunny on MTV's shows *Idiot Savants* and *Singled Out*. Not since the mid 1980s—the days of "Rock 'N' Wrestling"—have I seen Federation superstars sporting their talents on MTV. Back then, the relationship between the World Wrestling Federation and MTV was successful for both, and I know myself and millions of other fans are happy to see it is still

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- PAY-PER-VIEW POST-MATCH COMMENTS: ***OPTION 8***

alive and kicking! Keep it up... and is there any chance of seeing Jim Cornette on *House of Style*?

Jimmy Hepburn
JHep234@aol.com

Bring The Belt Home!!!

Fax

Dear Editor,

I can't tell you how happy I am that the World Wrestling Federation has finally decided to ride their wave of overseas success and create the fourth Federation Title—the European Championship. However, I hope that Federation officials don't make the mistake of allowing that title to solely be defended overseas like some other organizations do. Believe me, it's great to establish some momentum in Europe with the belt, but don't deny the fans in the United States the opportunity to see some title defenses here! Sometimes, with other organizations fans simply forget that the title exists.

Seth Verbosan
Augusta, MA

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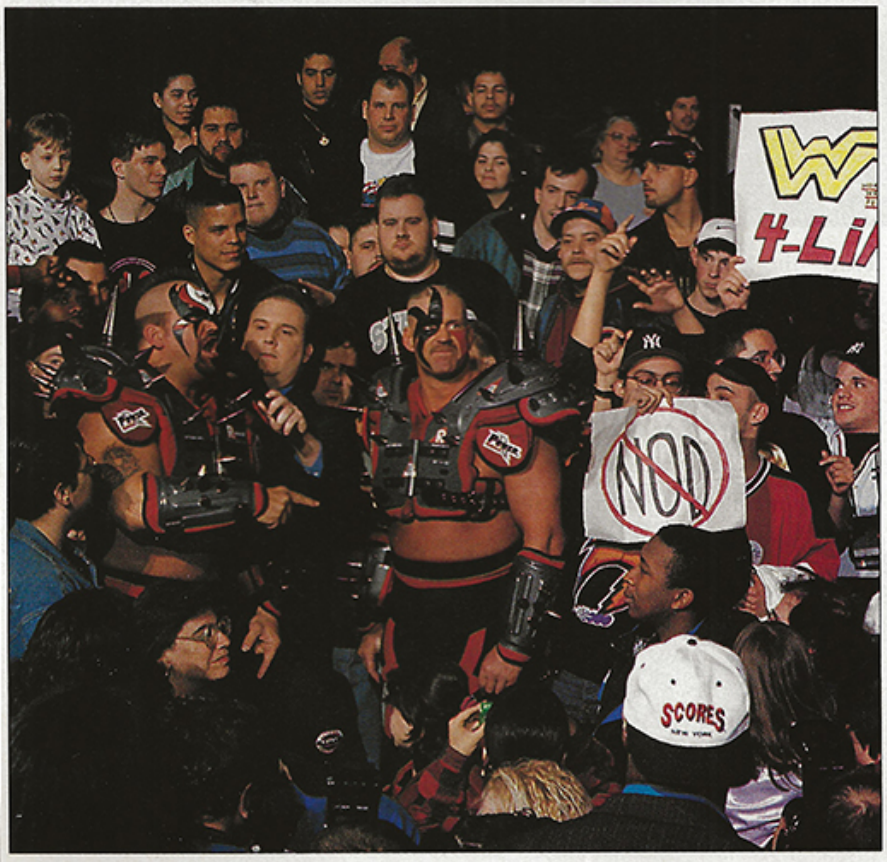
Doom Turns The Tables On The Nation!

Prior to their return to the rings of the World Wrestling Federation, rumor had it that ROAD WARRIOR HAWK and ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL were actually first contacted by CLARENCE MASON in an attempt to have them sign on the dotted line to join forces with the NATION OF DOMINATION!

"There is no question that MASON had been in touch with the LEGION OF DOOM prior to their *RAW* appearance," said my source. "As a matter of fact, two days before ANIMAL and HAWK showed up at the Manhattan Center, CLARENCE was overheard telling another member of the NATION that "ANIMAL and HAWK were all but in the bag!"

As HAWK would say, "WELLLL." What a surprise it must have been for the crafty lawyer when the "Chicago Bullies" not only showed up without his knowledge, but then proceeded to ATTACK THE NATION rather than JOIN IT!



Paul E.: Wanted By More Men Than One!!!

If you think that JERRY LAWLER was the only problem that EXTREME CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING's pompous leader PAUL E. had to deal with back in February on *MONDAY NIGHT RAW*, then you should think again!

Believe it, or not, a pumped-up, ferocious-looking JAMES E. CORNETTE had to be restrained in the locker room area—on more occasions than one—in order to be prevented from quieting the self-indulgent, big-mouth, renegade leader himself!

"PAUL E. would rather climb a tree and tell a lie than stand on the ground and tell the truth," screamed CORNETTE, as agents fought to keep him at bay.

Apparently JAMES E.'s "ill" feelings toward PAUL E. date back to the days when the two feuded in another promotion some ten years ago. "Back then, PAUL E. was only a slug... today he's a full-grown Jabba the Hut," screamed Cornette! "O.J. Simpson looks like Mother Teresa compared to this guy!"

Now, even though some may consider CORNETTE's last statement EXTREME... there are also many who tend to agree.

Me being one of them.

WHERE'S YOKO?

Once called the most daunting World Wrestling Federation Champion of all time, the mighty YOKOZUNA seemed to be letting his career slip away from him when he became engaged in the battle of his life... a battle with his own weight.

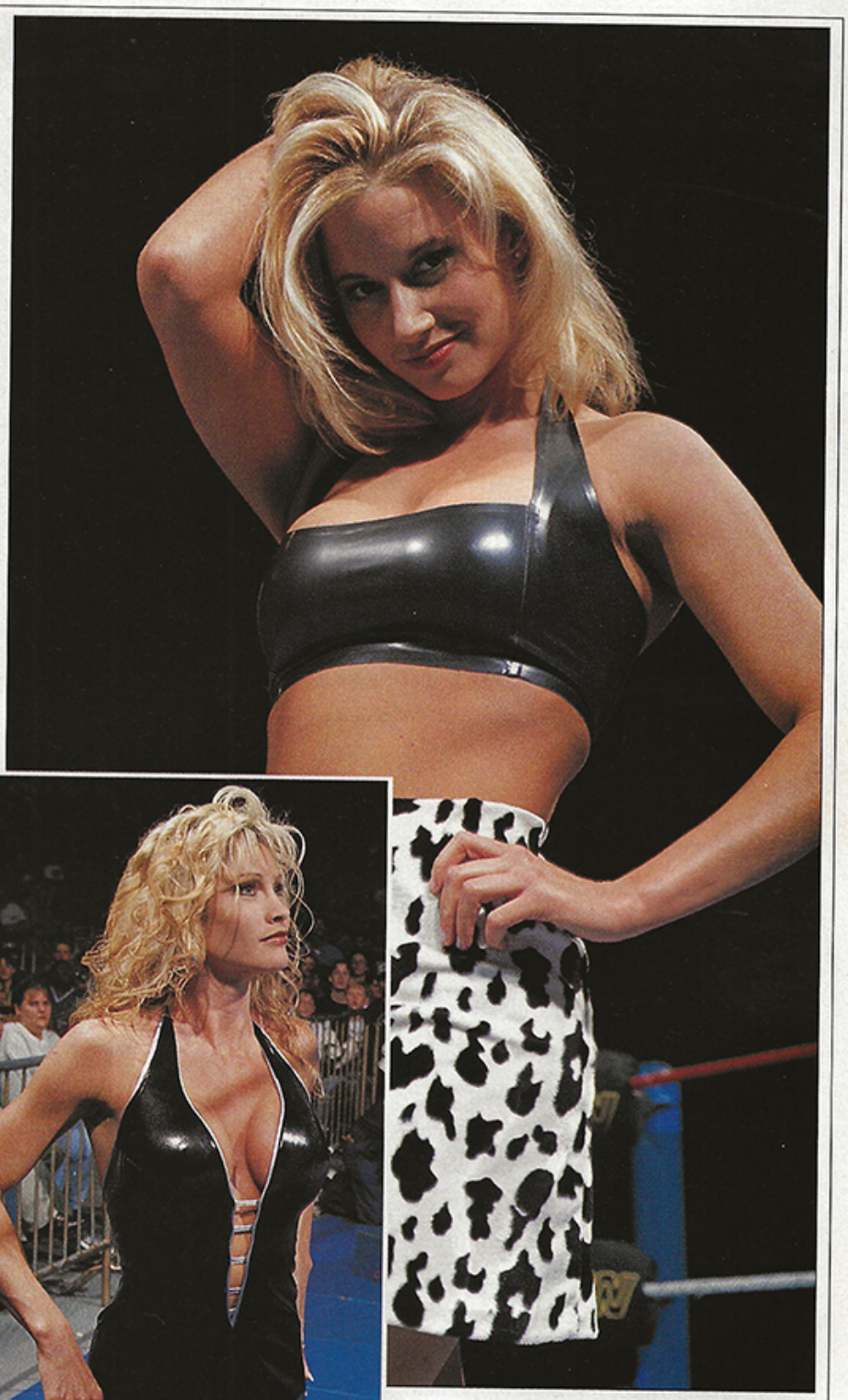
Last seen at the *Survivor Series*, the Sumo champion had allowed his weight to balloon to over 800 pounds before doctors warned him that not only was his career in jeopardy... but perhaps also his life. There could be no more failures. If YOKO didn't do something about his state of health in a hurry... his shoulders just may

have been pinned to the mat for the long count.

Fueled by a diet consisting of will and determination, I, the INFORMER, am happy to report that YOKO has dropped some 270 pounds since we last saw him in the Fall Classic. Now, with a fierce light blazing at the end of the proverbial tunnel, he eagerly anticipates the day when he will once again rule the ranks of the World Wrestling Federation.

"From mid-January to the first week in February I lost about 250 pounds of water weight alone," reported Yoko. "Since then I've been on a diet consisting of chicken, fish, vegetables and rice. I've dropped another 25 pounds over the past two weeks and I'm starting to feel real good. My goal is to return to the ring when I'm down to about 400 pounds, but ultimately I'd like to get down to about 300."

Raw Magazine hopes to have an update and an exclusive interview with YOKOZUNA in the July/August issue.



CAT-SCRATCH FEVER!

Fans who called into the World Wrestling Federation Superstar Line during February's IN YOUR HOUSE, had to be shocked when they heard—out of the blue—the vivacious SUNNY verbally lash out an attack on the vibrant SABLE!

In what appeared to be a personal issue, the Golden-Haired Fox berated the Cat's Meow with an arsenal of blue comments that cannot even be printed in this, the *RAW Magazine*! After SABLE returned the favor—with some choice remarks of her own—the two were separated by Federation officials and escorted back to their separate dressing rooms!

Where, when or how this obvious personal feud began is beyond even me, the INFORMER, BUT I will tell you this: it continues to escalate by the minute... and can—AND WILL—explode at any time!!! ■

Venom: Uncensored!!!

By Vic Venom

(DISCLAIMER: THE OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION OR TITAN SPORTS.)

How Shawn Michaels "Really" Lost His Smile

"Somewhere along the way I lost my smile... now, I have to go back and find it."

Shawn Michaels, *Thursday RAW, Thursday Live,* February 13, 1997

He had been there before. As a matter of fact, so was I... so were we all.

When Shawn Michaels was ordered to turn his Intercontinental Title over to Dean Douglas due to injuries sustained outside the ring, it was a humbling experience for him. Never in his life had he just had to turn over something that he had worked so hard for. It tore him apart inside. But, even more important at the time, Shawn realized that there were bigger issues to deal with... much bigger issues—his health. A few days prior, Shawn was beaten unconscious by a band of thugs from Syracuse. He suffered severe head trauma and his career hung in the balance. Losing the Intercontinental belt was nothing compared to the possibility of losing his livelihood.

Thursday RAW, Thursday Live. The minute I entered the building in Lowell, Massachusetts, I was told of Shawn's knee injury. Being a huge fan of Shawn's, the first thing I thought of was how bad this kid's luck has been. Well, you can just imagine how my feelings escalated when I was then told that Michaels was going to once again forfeit something he had worked so hard for—no, even harder for—the World Wrestling Federation Title. It's funny, but an hour before we were to go live on USA Network, I saw Shawn enter the building. In one of the rare—EXTREMELY rare—instances in my life... I didn't know what to say to the guy. I mean... what do you say? I knew how much winning back the belt—only three weeks before—had meant to him, and here he was just... well... just handing it over. No Sycho, no television camera to the back, no pin, he was just going to HAND it over. So, very un-Venom-like, I said nothing to Shawn. I completely turned my back on the situation. What do you say to a guy who has brought so much to you personally—and so much to millions around the world. There were no words... so, I said nothing.

"The World Wrestling Federation Champion... SHAWN MICHAELS," exploded Vince McMahon as the music boomed and Shawn Michaels made his way to the ring. The crowd was popping like Jiffy... having no idea what was about to take place next.

"Aw, this is going to be great," bellowed James E. Cornette, who was sitting next to me, shoveling Oscar Mayers down his throat and chasing them with streams of Sprite. You see, this is why I hate Cornette. There are times when you need to draw the line between business and life. Yeah, Shawn had made his life miserable in the past, but to root on an incident like this was pathetic!

"Seems like we've done this before," said an emotional Champion as the fans sat up and began to pay close attention. "I've never had a doctor look me in the face and tell me that I may never wrestle again... until yesterday." With the crowd now hushed, Shawn went on to explain the seriousness of a knee injury that had built up over a five-year span. In his next breath he went on to talk about the attitudes that were running rampant around the Federation and closed his thought by saying, "One thing that is not going to revolve around this belt anymore is Shawn Michaels. I'm gonna go back and see what's left."

I couldn't believe what my ears were hearing. No, not from Shawn's mouth, but rather the harsh Lowell fans. Now,

I've seen some tough crowds in my day, but not even Rodney Dangerfield could have won this one over. As Shawn splashed his guts out in the middle of the ring, a good percentage of the fans started chanting, "Sid, Sid, Sid". Oh, it's there. Go back and watch the tape. There was no way to edit it because we were live—this was for real, and this wasn't the way the story was supposed to go.

Hearing the chants, it seemed that Shawn stopped in mid-sentence. Now, let me tell you a little something about Shawn Michaels that you may not already know. You know the line, "I don't care if you love me, or hate me..." that Shawn has used on various occasions? Well, IN MY OPINION... Remember this is all MY OPINION—I don't want the Titan bigwigs to come after me with a roll of electrical tap to wind around my mouth, BUT the First Amendment gives me the right to say and print MY OPINION! So anyway... IN MY OPINION, the line "I don't care if you love me, or hate me... " is absolute horse@#$%! Shawn Michaels CARES. He's young, he's sensitive and he CARES! And, here he was telling his "so-called" fans that his career might be over and they were chanting "SID, SID, SID!" Any man would have been pushed over the edge here, and Shawn Michaels was no different. Forgetting his farewell speech... Shawn Michaels lost it. He lost it on live television.

In the moments that followed, Shawn went off on an emotional tangent. With tears spilling from his eyes, he told the fans that all he cared about was, "wanting them to have a good time". Then came the line that blew me away—"Somewhere along the way... I lost my smile." Now, call me crazy, but as a man of some intelligence, what the hell does a knee injury have to do with "losing your smile?" IN MY OPINION, Shawn Michaels was trying to tell the fans something here in a very special way! IN MY OPINION, there was much more here than just a knee injury. Shawn Michaels was coming across as a man who was about to experience a nervous breakdown!!!

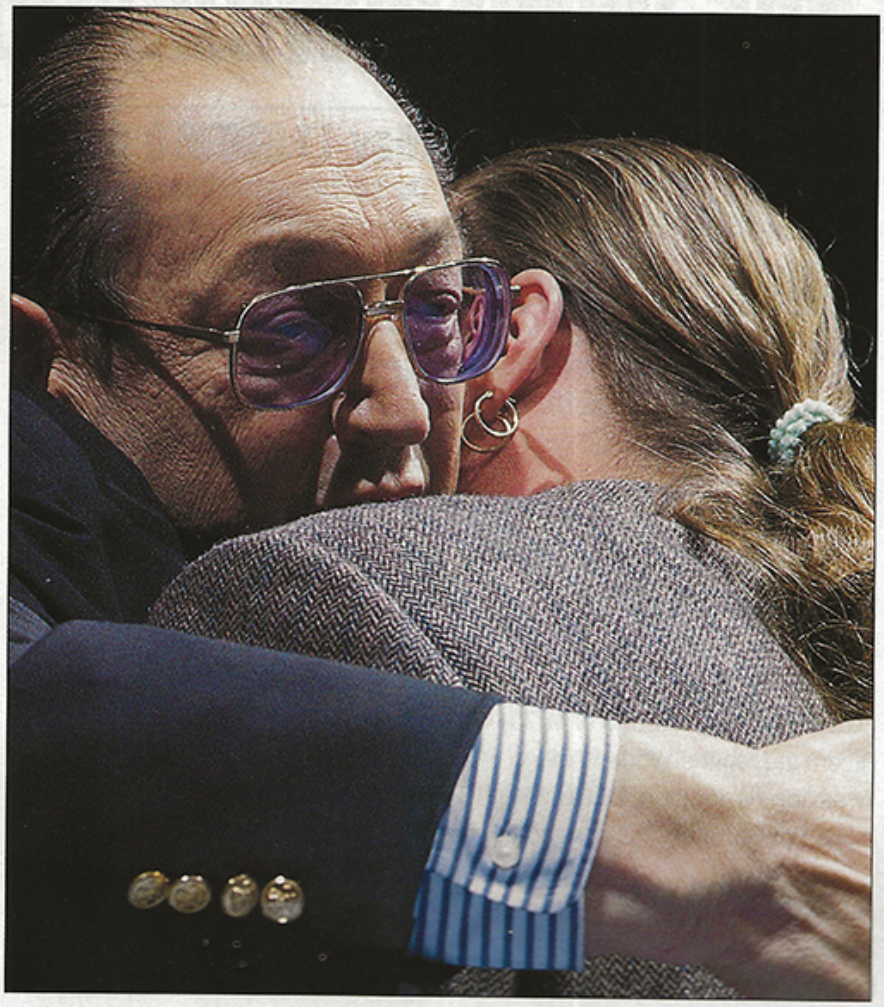
I can't ignore this, and I know I'm going to get in trouble for talking about it, but I have to! If I didn't, then I'd be the biggest hypocrite on "God's green earth!" I saw and heard something that night that I'm sure a lot of you reading this also did. For whatever reasons, everybody else has chosen not to talk about this, but I have to—IT'S MY JOB! Keep in mind what you are about to read is STRICTLY MY OPINION, so take it for what it's worth.

First of all, Shawn Michaels does have a legitimate knee injury. There is no doubt about that. It's been checked out by doctors, and it's serious. Hopefully rehabilitation will allow him to not only get back into the ring within the next couple of months, but, more important to Shawn, allow him to perform at the level he's capable of. If that is not possible, then there is no question in my mind that Shawn may never return to the squared circle. Shawn is a proud young man, and if he can't give you 100 percent... he'd rather give you nothing at all. As he said on *Thursday RAW, Thursday Live*, "I can't come out here and go half-ass."

Now, the part about "Losing his smile."

IN MY OPINION, it all started when Bret Hart returned to the World Wrestling Federation. I believe that after Shawn defeated Bret at *WrestleMania XII* and the "Hit Man" took a hiatus for awhile, Bret's fans became Shawn's supporters. I mean, why not? He defeated Bret in the middle of the ring—fair and square—and if Bret was going to be OUT, then why wouldn't you let Shawn IN? I'll give you the perfect example—if you are a Carolina Panthers fan, and the Packers defeated the Panthers in the playoffs, why not root for the Packers in the Super Bowl? I mean, if the Pack had not beaten the Panthers, then the Panthers would be in the Bowl. And, if the Packers win the Bowl, then the Panther fans can say, "If we had beaten the Packers, we would have been the Super Bowl Champs!" So, as a matter of pride, you root for the team that beat your team. In essence—you root for the guy who beat your guy. Now, also at the time—if you remember—Bret wasn't sure whether, or not, he was ever going to return to the World Wrestling Federation. Therefore, if you were a Bret Hart fan and there was a question whether Bret was ever going to return... then why not label Shawn your man?

Now, here's where Shawn Michaels was left wide open. If Bret's fans became his fans in Bret's absence, then what happens... when and if Bret returns? Now, I know that the World Wrestling Federation hierarchy would like to believe that you can cheer for both Shawn AND Bret BUT, IN MY OPINION, there are many fans out there who would disagree with that. I mean, can you root for both the Yankees and the Red Sox? I don't think so. I know that the Federation bigwigs don't want the fans to be put into a situation where they feel they HAVE TO choose, but IN MY OPINION that's just human



nature. If two guys legitimately don't like each other—and believe me, Bret and Shawn legitimately DON'T like each other—then it's almost impossible not to take sides!

So what happens? Well, not only does Bret return, but he returns with an even greater "dislike" (and I use that term liberally) for Shawn Michaels than he had before he left. Therefore, if he "dislikes" Shawn even more, then his fans—many of whom may have turned to Shawn in his absence—"dislike" Shawn even more! As a matter of fact, some found it very hard to swallow that they even cheered for Shawn at ALL! Now, don't get me wrong, as World Wrestling Federation Champion, Shawn had heard some boos. I mean, not everybody's going to like him. You have Stone Cold supporters, Sid supporters, Undertaker supporters, etc. BUT, when Bret returned... the boos DOUBLED. So, here was Shawn Michaels, a champion who gave everything he possibly could to the fans and here they were booing him. Now understand, to a professional athlete, getting jeered is part of the business. Ask Barry Bonds. Giants fans boo him all the time for the half-ass statements he makes to the media. But the difference is—when they boo Bonds... HE DOESN'T HEAR IT. HE DROWNS IT OUT. Shawn couldn't. He took it personally. In his heart he felt that he had given the fans so much—even blew out his knee for them—and this is the thanks he gets?!

You know what? I don't blame Shawn Michaels for feeling that way. How do you people BOO this guy?! I mean, whether you love him... or hate him... who gives you more than he does? If you don't like him, fine, I can understand that—BUT—you should respect him. I don't feel Shawn was feeling any respect. Even Bret Hart has said on many occasions, "I don't like Shawn Michaels... but I respect his talent." Kids, there was no respect on *Thursday RAW, Thursday Live* and, IN MY OPINION, that wasn't the time or place to cheer, "SID". I mean, sitting in that arena, I wanted to crawl under a rock. Can you imagine how Shawn felt? Yeah, I would have had a nervous breakdown, too! Now, if you add to that the pressure that Shawn was feeling due to the legitimate bad blood "behind the scenes" that exists between him and Bret—the bad blood that has been boiling for nearly a year—and you know what? Shawn Michaels becomes an EMOTIONAL MESS!!!

Now, don't accuse me of jumping on any soap box for Shawn Michaels, because I'm not. I merely understand and RESPECT him. Remember, as "larger than life" as any World Wrestling Federation superstar appears to be, when it comes down to it... they're skin, blood and bone, just like everybody else. Shawn Michaels has made mistakes during his career—more than one—but that doesn't change the fact that all he ever wanted to do was ensure that the fans "have a good time".

Will Shawn Michaels find his smile? Well, whether you "love him or hate him", you sure as hell ought to hope so, because if he doesn't... it will be the WRESTLING FANS IN GENERAL who come up on the short end of the "Sweet Chin Music!"

Think about it. ■

HISTORY OF THE WORLD(WIDE) WRE

June 1971
Luke Graham and Tarzan Tyler (New Orleans, LA)

Federation Fact: Graham and Tyler beat Dick the Bruiser and the Sheik in a tournament for the belts.

June 12, 1971
Karl Gotch and Rene Goulet (New York, NY)

February 1, 1972
Baron Mikel Scicluna and King Curtis Iaukea (Philadelphia, PA)

May 22, 1972
Sonny King and Chief Jay Strongbow (New York, NY)

June 27, 1972
Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji (Philadelphia, PA)

May 30, 1973
Tony Garea and Haystacks Calhoun (Hamburg, PA)

September 11, 1973
Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji (Philadelphia, PA)

November 14, 1973
Tony Garea and Dean Ho (Hamburg, PA)

May 8, 1974
Jimmy and Johnny Valiant (Hamburg, PA)

May 13, 1975
Dominic DeNucci and Victor Rivera (Philadelphia, PA)

Federation Fact: In June of 1975, Rivera leaves the World Wide Wrestling Federation. DeNucci picks Pat Barrett as his new co-titlist.

August 26, 1975
Blackjack Mulligan and Blackjack Lanza (Philadelphia, PA)

November 18, 1975
Tony Parisi and Louis Cerdan (Philadelphia, PA)

May 11, 1976
The Executioners (Philadelphia, PA)

Federation Fact: The Executioners were Killer Kowalski and the late Big John Studd under masks.

October 26, 1976
Title is declared VACANT

Federation Fact: The Executioners are stripped of the title for using an illegal third member (Nikolai Volkoff) during a title defense.

December 7, 1976
Chief Jay Strongbow and Billy White Wolf (Philadelphia, PA)

Federation Fact: Strongbow and Wolf win a three-team elimination tournament to win the belts.

August 1977
Title is declared VACANT

Federation Fact: Billy White Wolf is injured by Ken Patera and cannot defend the belt.

September 27, 1977
Toru Tanaka and Mr. Fuji (Philadelphia, PA)

Federation Fact: Tanaka and Fuji beat Tony Garea and Larry Zbysko to declare new champions.

March 14, 1978
Dominic DeNucci and Dino Bravo (Philadelphia, PA)

June 26, 1978
The Yukon Lumberjacks (New York, NY)

November 21, 1978
Tony Garea and Larry Zbysko (Allentown, PA)

STLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM TITLE

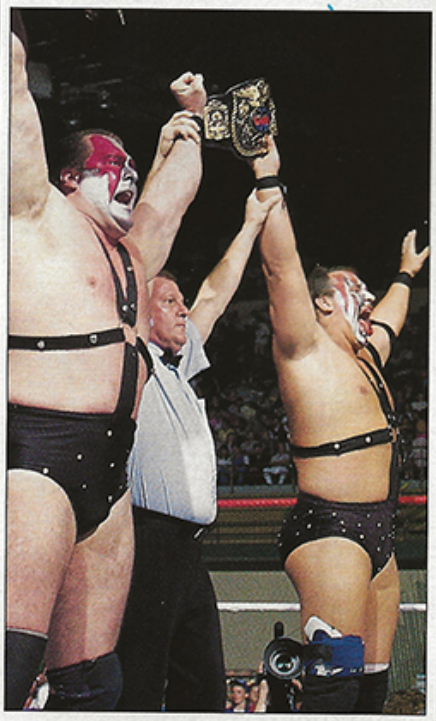
March 6, 1979
Johnny and Jerry Valiant (Allentown, PA)

1979—World Wide Wrestling Federation Tag Team Title is renamed World Wrestling Federation Tag Team Title

October 22, 1979
Ivan Putski and Tito Santana (New York, NY)

April 12, 1980
The Samoans: Afa and Sika (Philadelphia, PA)

August 9, 1980
Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales (New York, NY)



August 10, 1980
Title is declared VACANT

Federation Fact: At the time Backlund wins the Tag Team Title, he is already the Federation Champion. Federation rules state you cannot hold more than one title at one time, so Backlund gives up the Tag Team Title.

September 9, 1980
The Samoans: Afa and Sika (Allentown PA)

Federation Fact: Afa and Sika beat Tony Garea and Rene Goulet to declare new champions.

November 8, 1980
Tony Garea and Rick Martel (Philadelphia, PA)

March 17, 1981
The Moondogs: Rex and King (Allentown, PA)

May 1981
The Moondogs: Rex and Spot

Federation Fact: Spot takes over for King after he is unable to enter the United States from Canada.

July 21, 1981
Tony Garea and Rick Martel (Allentown, PA)

October 13, 1981
Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito (Allentown, PA)

June 28, 1982
Chief Jay and Jules Strongbow (New York, NY)

July 13, 1982
Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito (Allentown, PA)

October 26, 1982
Chief Jay and Jules Strongbow (Allentown, PA)

March 8, 1983
Samoans: Afa and Sika (Allentown, PA)

Federation Fact: On March 12, 1983, Sika is injured in Baltimore. Samoan #3 (Sam Anoia) takes his place to defend the belt for a brief period of time.

November 15, 1983
Rocky Johnson and Tony Atlas (Allentown, PA)

April 17, 1984
Adrian Adonis and Dick Murdoch (Hamburg, PA)

January 21, 1985
Mike Rotundo and Barry Windham (Hartford, CT)

March 31, 1985
Iron Sheik and Nikolai Volkoff (New York, NY)

June 17, 1985
Mike Rotundo and Barry Windham (Poughkeepsie, NY)

August 24, 1985
Greg Valentine and Brutus Beefcake (Philadelphia, PA)

April 7, 1986
British Bulldogs: Davey Boy Smith and the Dynamite Kid (Chicago, IL)

January 26, 1987
Hart Foundation: Bret Hart and Jim Neidhart (Tampa, FL)

Federation Fact: On August 10, 1987, the Fabulous Rougeaus win the belts in Montreal, but the decision is later overturned.

October 27, 1987
Strike Force: Tito Santana and Rick Martel (Syracuse, NY)

March 27, 1988
Demolition: Ax and Smash (Atlantic City, NJ)

July 18, 1989
Brain Busters (Worcester, MA)

October 2, 1989
Demolition (Wheeling, WV)

December 13, 1989
Andre the Giant and Haku (Huntsville, AL)

April 1, 1990
Demolition (Toronto, Ontario, CAN)
Federation Fact: Crush later joins the team to defend the title with Smash.

August 27, 1990
Hart Foundation (Philadelphia, PA)
Federation Fact: On October 30, 1990, Shawn Michaels and Marty Jannetty win the title in Indiana. However, the decision is quickly overturned.

March 24, 1991
Nasty Boys: Knobbs and Sags (Los Angeles, CA)

August 26, 1991
Legion of Doom: Animal and Hawk (New York, NY)

February 7, 1992
Money Inc: Ted DiBiase and IRS (Denver, CO)

July 20, 1992
Natural Disasters: Earthquake and Typhoon (Worcester, MA)

October 13, 1992
Money Inc. (Regina, Saskatchewan, CAN)

June 14, 1993
The Steiner Brothers: Rick and Scott (Columbus, OH)

June 16, 1993
Money Inc. (Rockford, IL)

June 19, 1993
The Steiner Brothers (St. Louis, MO)

September 13, 1993
Quebecers: Jacques and Pierre (New York, NY)

January 10, 1994
Marty Jannetty and the 1-2-3 Kid (Richmond, VA)

January 17, 1994
Quebecers (New York, NY)

March 29, 1994
Men On A Mission: Mabel and Mo (London, ENG)

March 31, 1994
Quebecers (Sheffield, ENG)

April 26, 1994
Headshrinkers: Fatu and Samu (Burlington, VT)

August 28, 1994
Shawn Michaels and Diesel (Indianapolis, IN)

November 1994
Title is declared VACANT
Federation Fact: Michaels and Diesel split up and give up the title.

January 22, 1995
Bob "Spark Plugg" Holly and the 1-2-3 Kid (Tampa, FL)
Federation Fact: Holly and the Kid defeat Bam Bam Bigelow and Tatanka in a Tag Team Tournament final at the 1995 *Royal Rumble*.

January 23, 1995
The Smoking Gunns (Palmetto, FL)

April 2, 1995
Owen Hart and Yokozuna (Hartford, CT)

September 24, 1995
Diesel and Shawn Michaels (Saginaw, MI)

Federation Fact: The decision is overturned the next day because the British Bulldog substituted for Owen Hart during the match.

September 25, 1995
The Smoking Gunns (Grand Rapids, MI)

Federation Fact: After getting their title back from the night before at *In Your House*, Owen and Yokozuna are forced to defend them against the Gunns on *RAW* the following night.

January 1996
Federation Tag Team Title is declared VACANT.

Federation Fact: Billy Gunn injures his neck and is unable to defend the title with Bart.

March 31, 1996
The Body Donnas (Anaheim, CA)

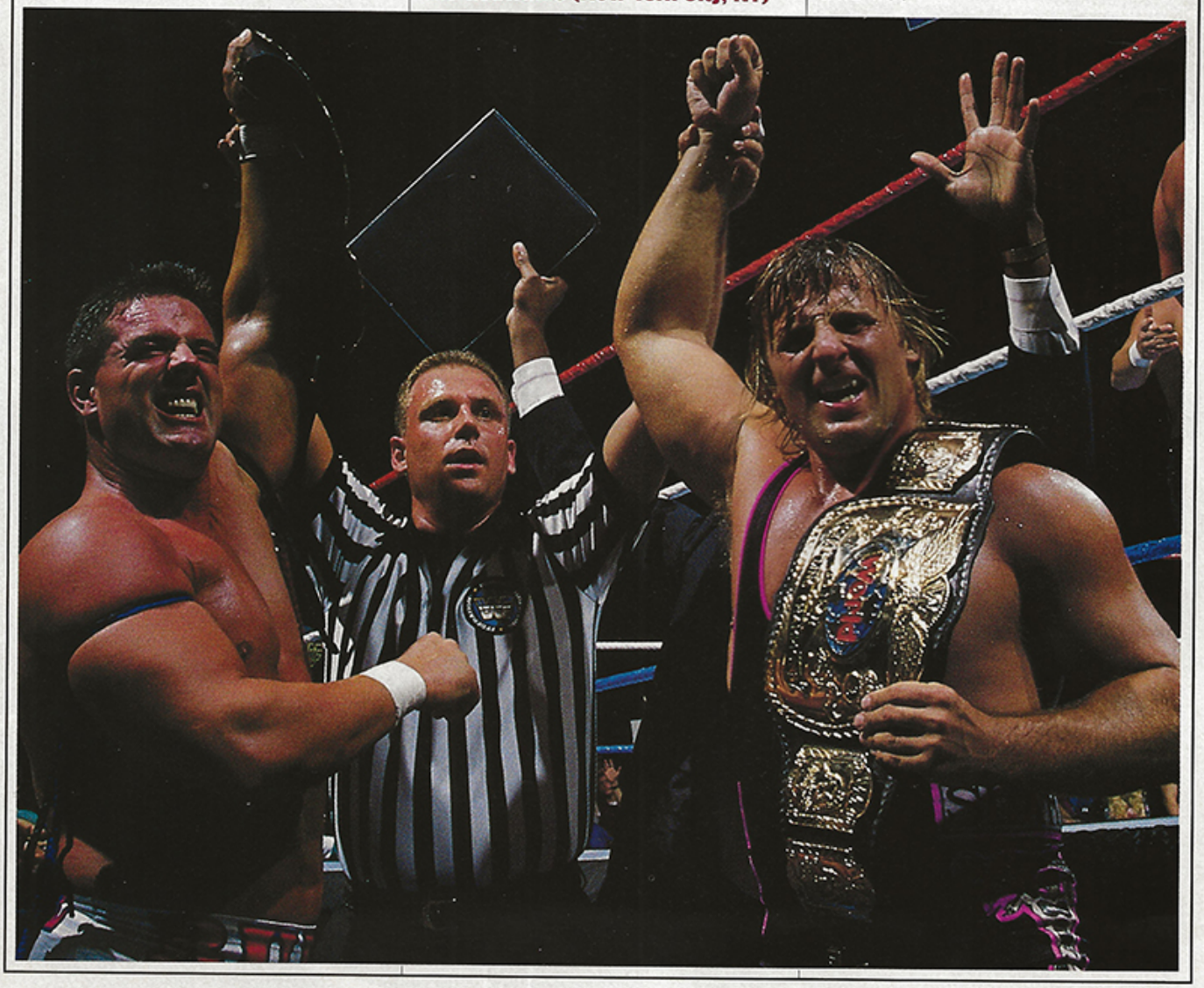
Federation Fact: The Body Donnas defeat the Godwinns at the *WrestleMania XII* Free-For-All tournament final.

May 19, 1996
The Godwinns (New York City, NY)

May 26, 1996
The Smoking Gunns (Florence, SC)

October 20, 1996
Owen Hart and the British Bulldog (Indianapolis, IN)

A special thank you goes to Royal Duncan and Gary Will whose *Wrestling Title Histories—Third Edition*, published by Archeus Communications in Canada, provided us with valuable information while compiling this list.



The European

The Quarters

BRITISH BULLDOG vs. MANKIND

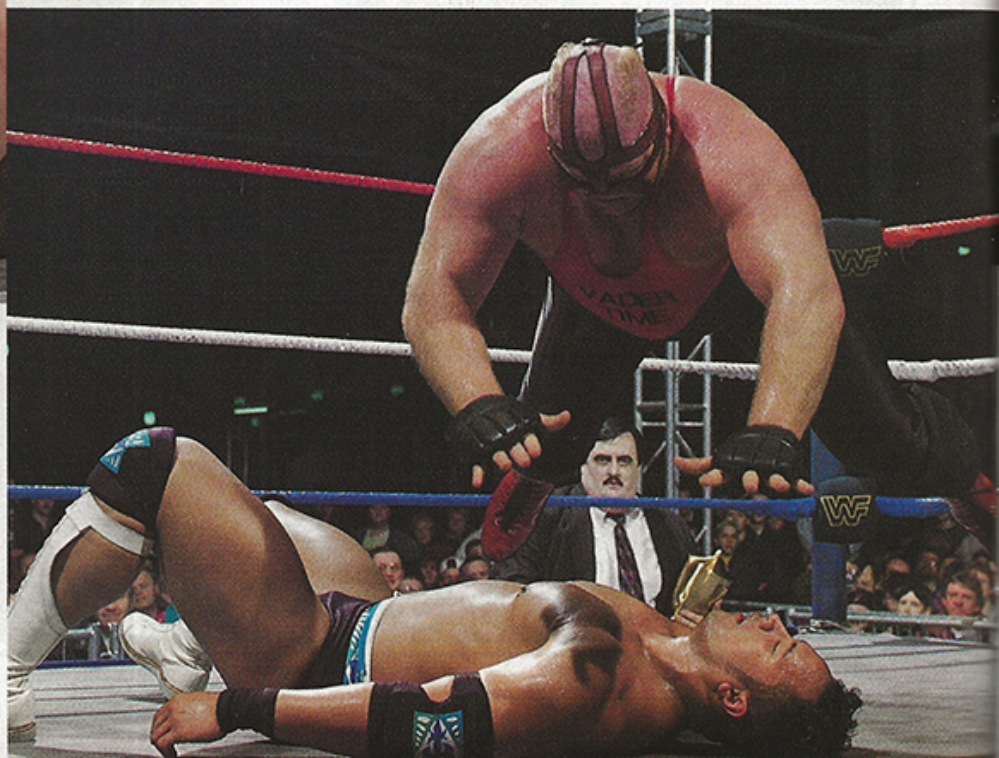
In a match that seesawed back and forth, Paul Bearer was instrumental in helping Mankind gain the upper claw when he distracted the referee, allowing the "Demented Cellar Dweller" to clock the Bulldog with his metal urn. The "Deranged One" then proceeded to cover the groggy Dog, but somehow Davey Boy managed to kick out on the count of two. The Bulldog was then able to muster up a short comeback, but it quickly backfired on him. As he attempted to set up Mankind for the Powerslam, the outpatient viciously shoved his fingers down the Dog's throat, locking in the Mandible Claw. Bulldog crumbled to the mat, seemingly unconscious; however, to the surprise of Mankind... he still had some steam left. Before Mankind could finish the job, Bulldog escaped his clutches, courtesy of a crippling Mexican Uppercut. Then, before he realized what had hit him, Mankind was caught with a thunderous Bulldog Powerslam, followed by a cover and the 1-2-3.

ROCKY MAIVIA vs. VADER

From the start it looked like it might be an easy victory for the Mastodon. Outweighing the young rookie sensation by nearly 200 pounds, Vader punished Maivia, throwing everything he had at the Intercontinental Champion. Time and time again, it looked as if Rocky was one Vader blow away from being finished... but the young lion just didn't know the word quit. Like his father and grandfather before him, Rocky dug from deep within himself and was somehow able to absorb the punishment that Vader penetrated on his body. Miraculously, the tide seemed to slowly turn as Vader began to grow tired, unable to finish the resilient kid from the South Pacific. In an amazing showcase of intestinal fortitude, Rocky slammed and then suplexed Vader, shocking not only the thousands in attendance, but the Mastodon himself. Then, before Vader even knew it, Rocky came off the top turnbuckle and floored him with a tremendous cross body, then covered him for the 1-2-3.

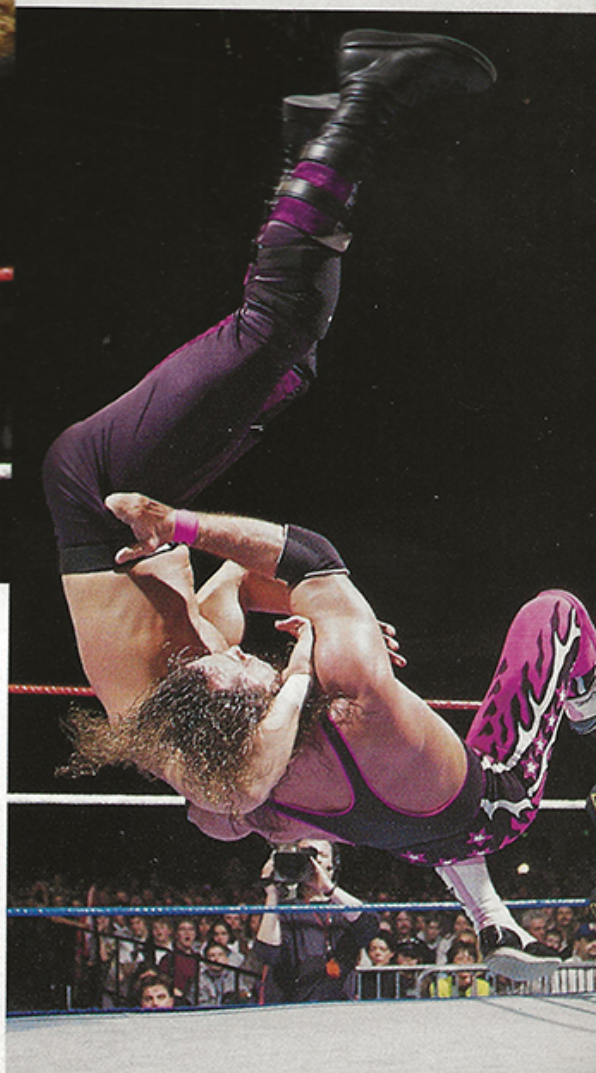
FLASH FUNK vs. OWEN HART

In a match that was nothing short of a human highlight film, Funk and Hart threw the *Wrestling Handbook*



Championship

showcase. There were a number of times during the course of the match when each superstar seemed to gain an advantage. But within minutes the tide would turn again, almost leaving the contest a stalemate. Unfortunately, like his brother in the previous match, Bret seemed to grind Helmsley down, softening him up for vulnerability. Then at the appropriate moment, Bret coiled Hunter's legs in the Sharpshooter, leaving Triple H with no other choice but to submit.

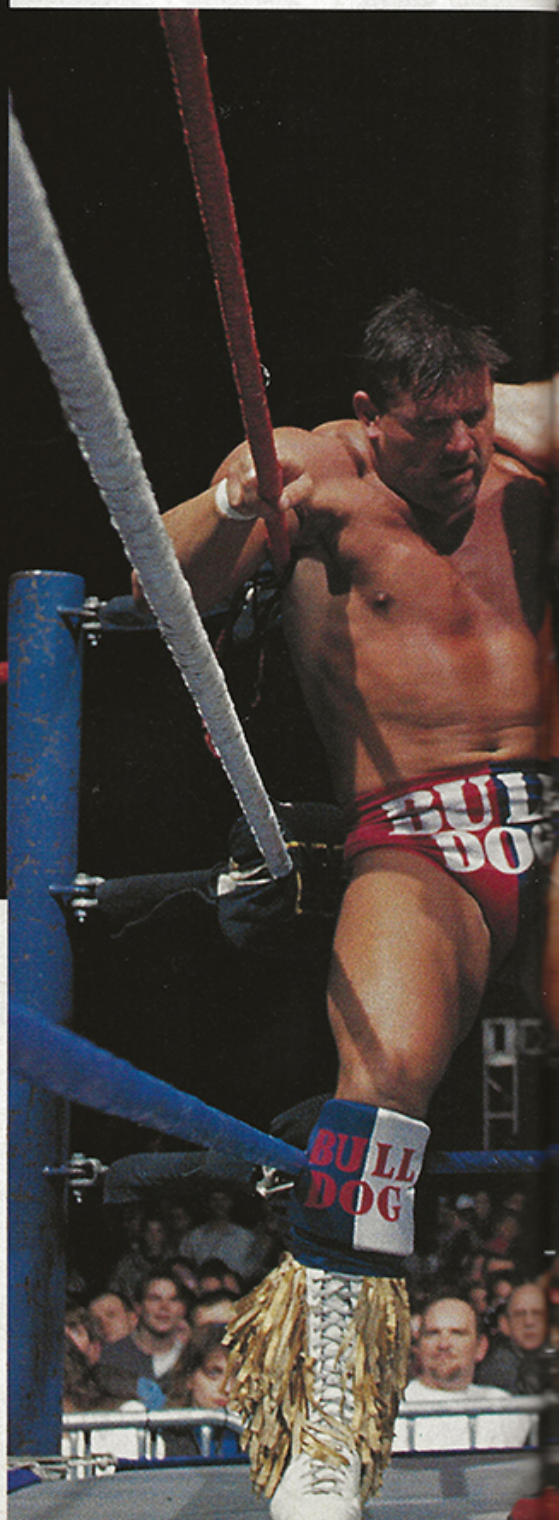


at each other. Both superstars had various chances throughout the match to pin their opponents, but neither would give in. In the end, it was the experience of Owen Hart that appeared to be the difference. One of the best mat strategists in the game, Owen set Flash up for his stunning spin kick just at the right time, nailing the unsuspecting Funk in the back of the head and covering him for the pin.

BRET HART vs. HUNTER HEARST-HELMSLEY

In a battle of two of the most premier athletes in the World Wrestling Federation, both men exchanged moves and counter-moves throughout in what turned out to be a very evenly matched

with a tremendous clothesline to Vader's throat. Without missing a beat, Davey then climbed the strands and came off with a Big Splash. On reflex alone, Vader raised his knees at the last minute, catching Bulldog in the abdomen. Vader then crawled to his feet and pulled a winded Bulldog



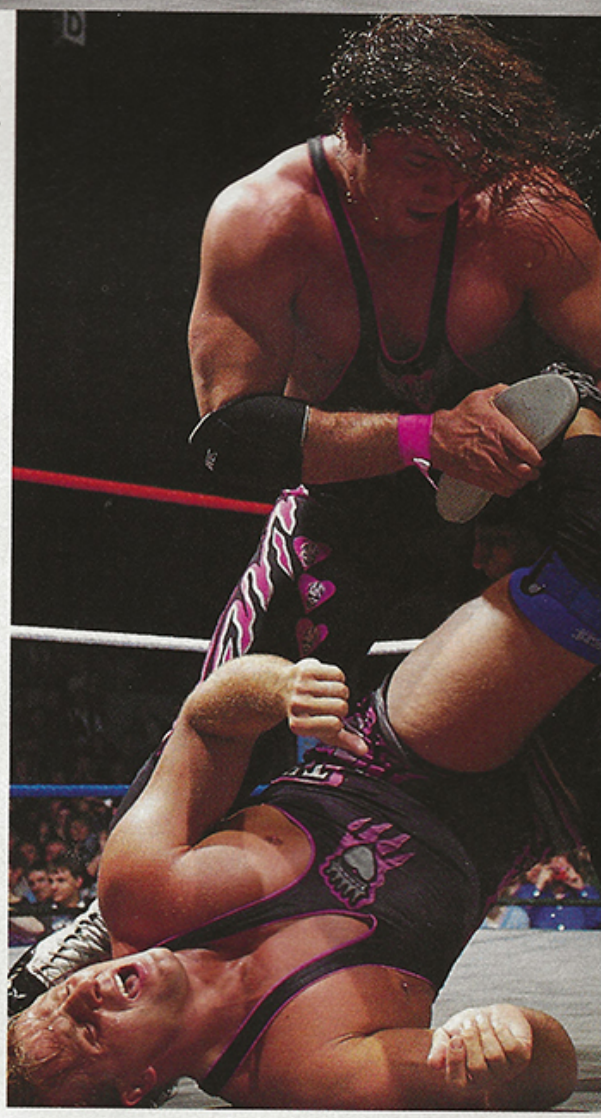
BRITISH BULLDOG vs. VADER

In what turned out to be a power versus power match, the two gladiators pounded each other into oblivion in an effort to see who would crumble first. After Vader seized a brief advantage, Davey Boy made a comeback and attempted to pick up Vader for the Powerslam. As Paul Bearer climbed up to the ring apron to give Vader moral support, a beaten and battered Bulldog found that he couldn't quite get the Mastodon up. So, rather than hurt himself in the process, Bulldog turned his sights to Bearer and attempted to separate the mortician's head from his shoulders. As Davey's back was turned to Vader, the Mastodon charged at him from behind. Feeling his presence, Bulldog ducked out of the way, causing Vader to crash into his manager, dropping him to the arena floor. With that, the Bulldog went back on the offensive. He hit the ropes, coming off

closer to the corner of the ring, setting him up for the deadly Vader Splash. But Bulldog wasn't about to go out so easy. The Brit shocked the Mastodon when he rose to his feet, caught him coming off and slammed him hard to the canvas. All that was left for the Bulldog to do was to cover Vader for the 1-2-3.

BRET HART vs. OWEN HART

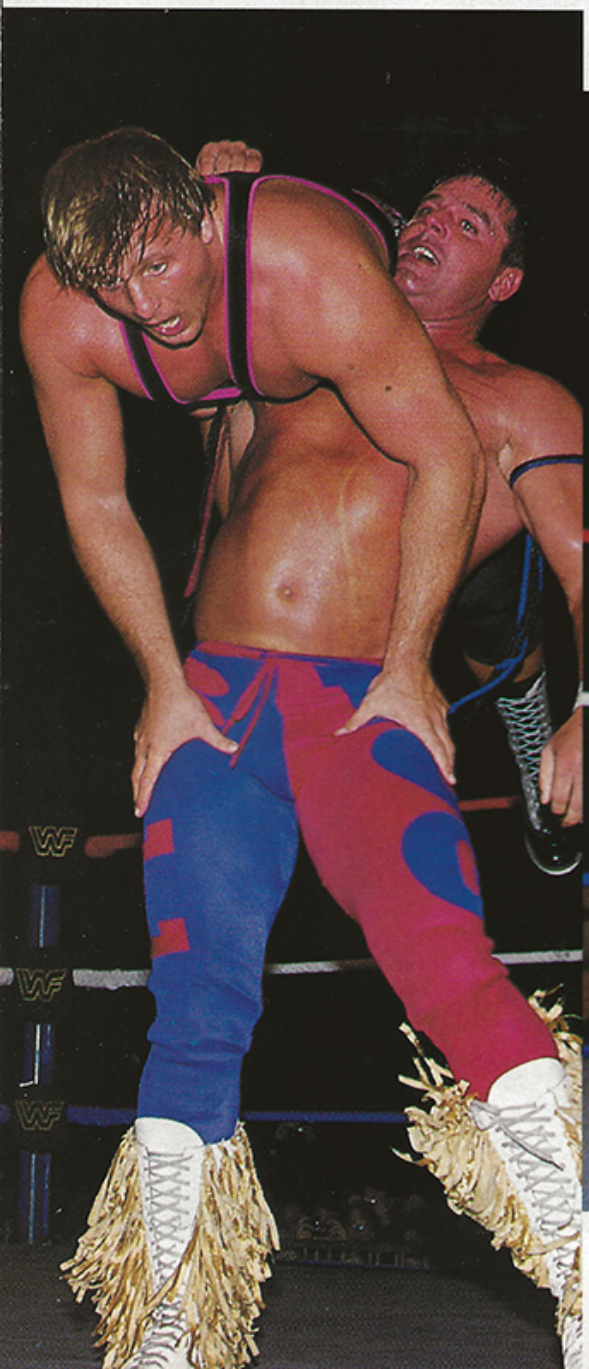
The family feud continues. In the process of Bret cinching brother Owen in the Sharpshooter, the referee was inadvertently knocked out. Seeing an opportunity to bail his partner out of trouble, the British Bulldog bee-lined it to the ring, in an effort to break Owen free of the fatal hold. Unfortunately for Davey Boy, Bret broke it himself, then ferociously caught the Dog with a devastating clothesline, dropping him over the top rope. Having time to collect himself, Owen eventually got to his feet, and then proceeded to drop brother Bret through the ropes. With the referee still out, the two brawled outside the ring. Owen then managed to climb back into the squared circle as the Bulldog—who was now keeping a low profile—clung on to Bret's legs on the outside, keeping him from entering as well. Unfortunately for the Hit Man, the referee finally came to, causing Bret to lose the match via count-out.

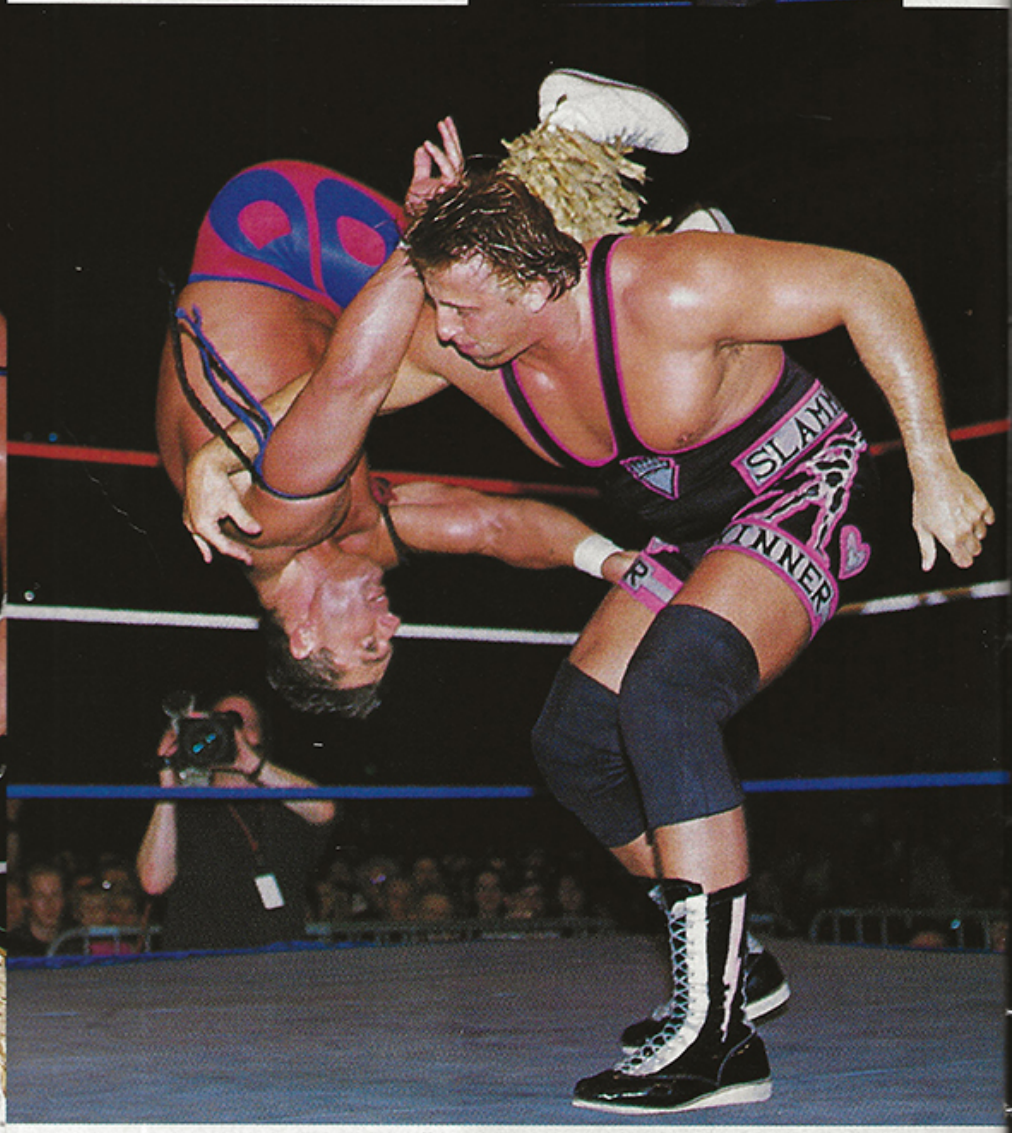


The Finals

BRITISH BULLDOG vs. OWEN HART

The battle of supremacy between partners and brothers-in-law Davey Boy Smith and Owen Hart brought the family feud to even greater heights. Being the current World Wrestling Federation Tag Team Champions, it was extremely difficult for either individual to gain the upper hand as they both knew each other's wrestling styles better than anyone else ever could. At times the Bulldog relied on his power, which appeared to give him an edge. However, Owen would counter the attack with speed and quickness, a game plan that the Bulldog had difficulty defending against. In the end, when all was said and done, the match would come down to one miscalculation. After Owen Hart perched himself on the shoulders of the Bulldog, setting him up for a pinning victory roll, Davey was able to reverse the momentum and hook Owen's legs for the 1-2-3. When the final bell of the tournament sounded, Davey Boy Smith, the British Bulldog, had become the World Wrestling Federation's first European Champion! ■





EUROPEAN
CHAMPION

Back on February 3, *Monday Night RAW* again made history when a record-setting crowd of nearly 27,000 fans showed up at the Toronto SkyDome to view one of the most exciting evenings of sports-entertainment action to ever take place north of the border! On this unforgettable evening, not only did the Canadian loyals have the opportunity to view *RAW* live, but they also witnessed a unique "Triple Threat" match with the World Wrestling Federation Title on the line.

Shawn Survives a "Triple Threat"!!!

OH CANA

BY VINCE RUSSO

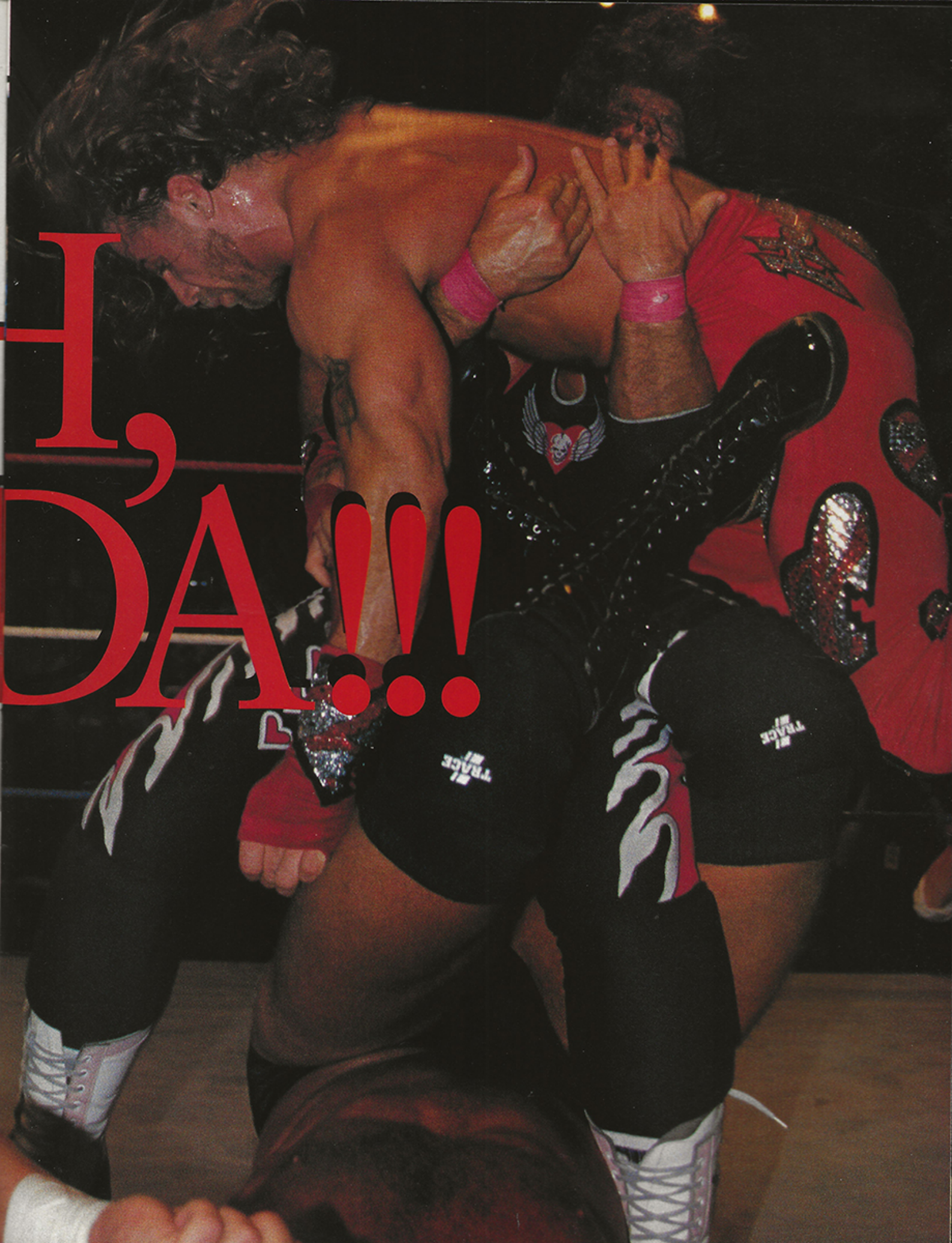
TRIPLE THREAT MATCH SHAWN VS. BRET VS. SID

The rules were simple: The man who scored the pinfall would not only win the match, but also become the WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION CHAMPION. Yes, if Bret pinned Sid, he would be crowned Champion, OR if Sid pinned Bret, he would get the gold—REGARDLESS of what the current Federation Champion Shawn Michaels was doing at that time. In other words, to retain his title, Shawn not only had to score the pin, BUT he also had to keep Bret and Sid from pinning each other! Oh, by the way, in this precedent-setting match—all three wrestlers were to compete in the ring... AT THE SAME TIME!!!

At the sound of the bell, Shawn and Bret met in the middle of the ring to "exchange pleasantries", only to allow Sycho Sid to breakup the powwow by viciously slamming their heads together. Wasting no time, Sid then proceeded to throw Shawn to the outside of the ring, while viciously attacking Bret on the inside. After delivering the Hit Man with a brief pummeling, the fiery Sycho decided it was now Shawn's turn, as he pulled the fallen champion back into the ring. In a frenzy, Sid pounded his ex-employer, by first blocking a desperate dose of "Sweet Chin Music", and then burying the Champ via the Powerbomb!

With Shawn apparently down and out, Sid climbed to the top rope in hopes of finishing the job. Unfortunately, he found that his job had just begun, as Bret came out of nowhere and slammed him from the top strand to the bottom of the mat. With Sid flat on his back, the Hit Man turned his sights on the Heartbreak Kid. Looking to be the aggressor, Bret set up Shawn for an Irish Whip. Michaels reversed it, however, and threw the Hit Man hard into the turnbuckles. After first clear-

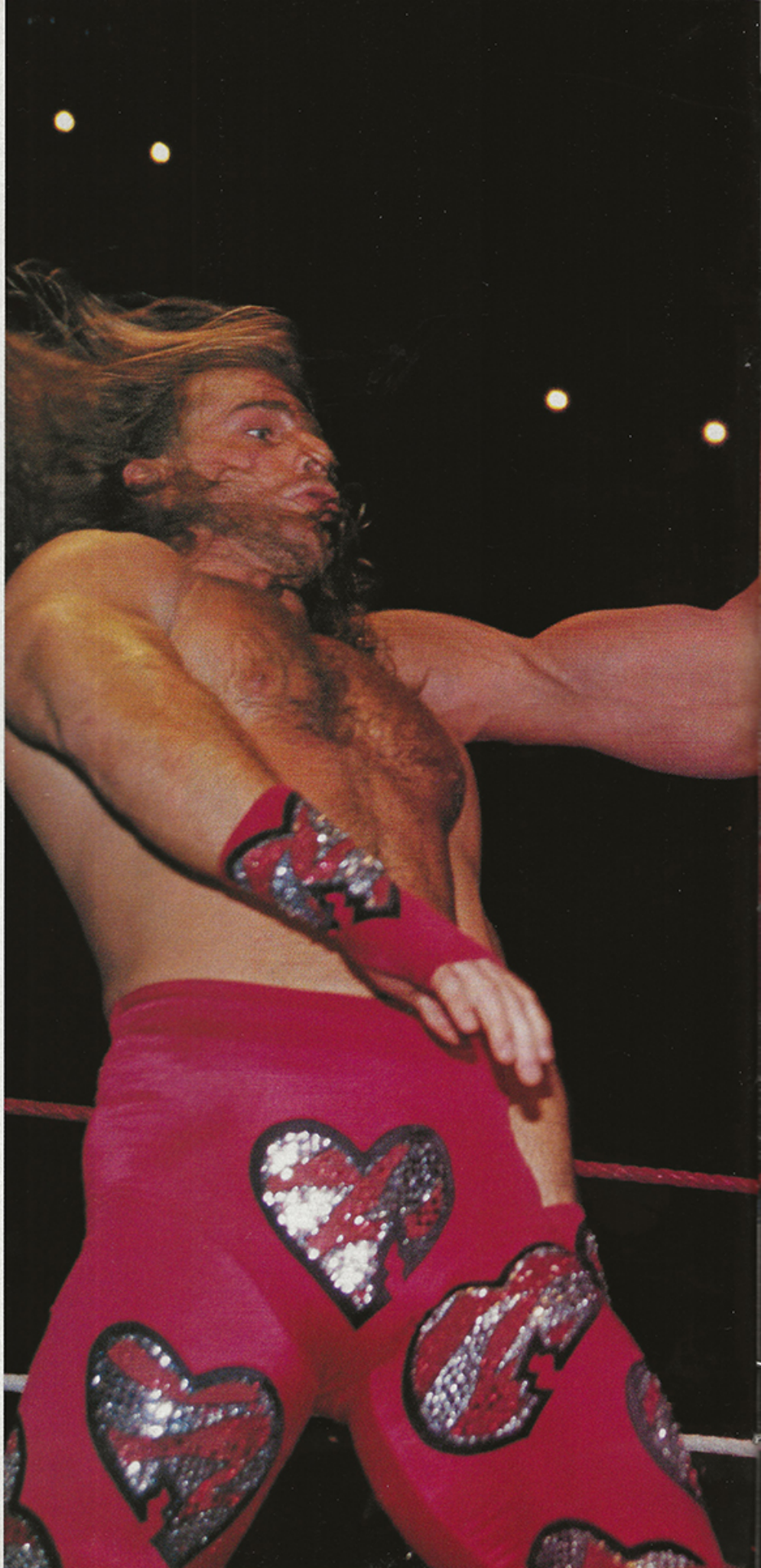
In a dramatic outcome to a Triple Threat Match that took place with Shawn Michaels, Bret "Hit Man" Hart and Sycho Sid, Shawn leaps from the apron, over the top rope onto a helpless Bret Hart who apparently had Sycho Sid tied up in the Sharpshooter.


I,
D'A!!!

ing the ring of Sid, Shawn dropped Bret with a devastating dropkick in the middle of the ring. Thinking that the second time would be the charm, Shawn went for a second, only to be caught in midair by an anticipating Hit Man. Looking to turn the tide, Bret threw Shawn hard to the canvas, then pounced on him, tying him up with the Sharpshooter. But as Bret feverishly twisted Shawn's limbs, Sid nailed the Hit Man from behind, causing him to break the hold.

As Bret crumbled to the mat, Sid savagely threw Shawn outside on the ring where he dropped him—neck first—across the steel guardrail. With the damage apparently done to the Champion, Sid crawled back into the ring and attempted to cover Bret for the win, but a relentless Hit Man kicked out at the count of two. Sensing victory was near, Sid proceeded to drop a leg across the throat of the Hit Man, but again miraculously Bret kicked out. Now, there was only one thing left for the punishing Sycho to do... finish the Hit Man via his crushing Powerbomb! After burying Bret's cranium into the canvas, covering him for the win now appeared all but a technicality for Sid. That is until... Shawn made the save of both his nemesis AND the Federation Title by nailing Sid from the top rope! Unfortunately for HBK, interrupting Sid's party only seemed to "upset" the menacing outpatient even more. With the power of a gladiator, Sid picked up Michaels, pressed him high above his head and crashed him down into the canvas.

If the match wasn't over before, it was over now... but not according to Bret Hart. Having the time to gather his wind, the Hit Man attacked Sid from behind, then violently threw him from the ring. Now nothing stood between Bret and the Federation Title... EXCEPT Shawn Michaels. In a fury, the Hit Man took it to Shawn, first beating him with a

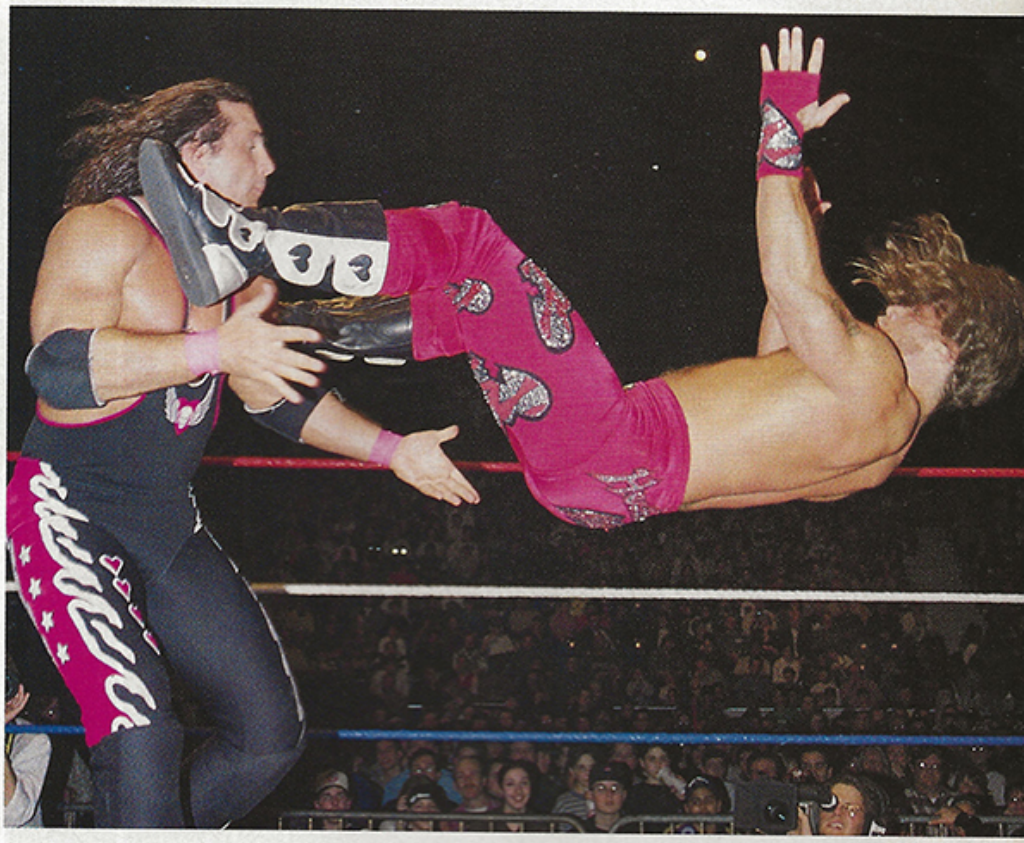


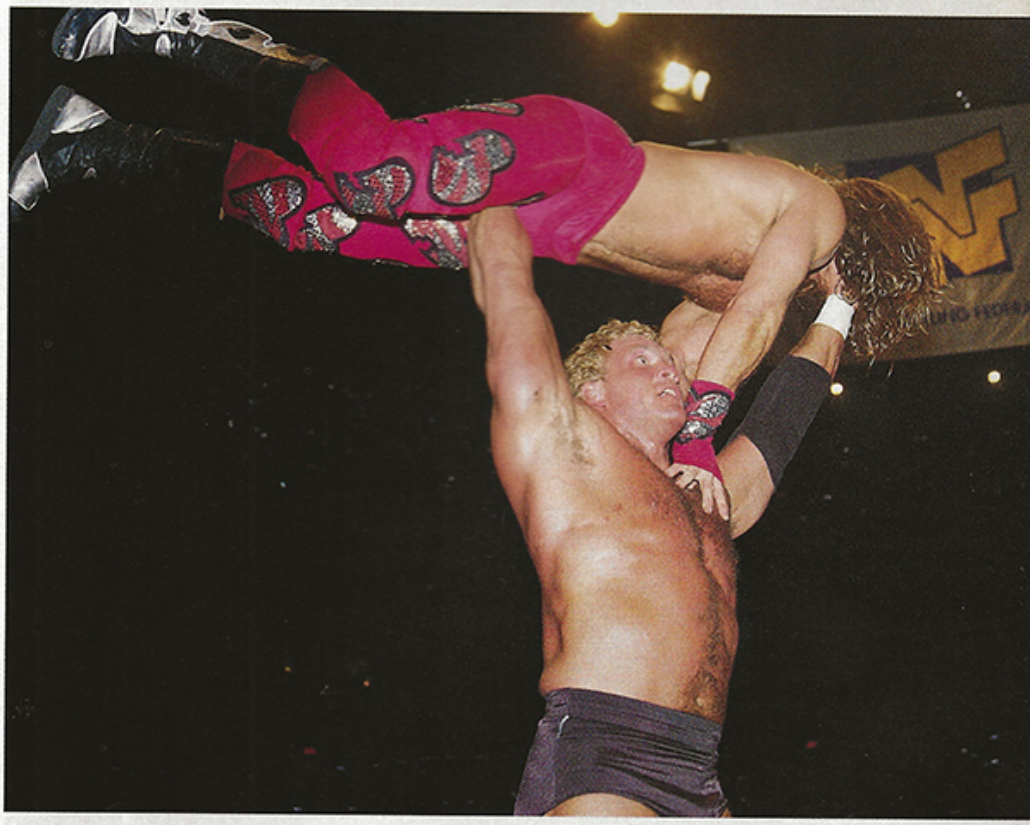
After fending off the aerial assault of his much quicker opponents, Sid caught Hart and Michaels by the hair and made the two kiss and make up—THE HARD WAY!

barrage of flying fists and then dropping him on his back with a Russian Leg Sweep. Bret then went for the cover, but Shawn kicked out on two. With no sign of letting up in sight, Bret nailed Shawn with a punishing back breaker, only to have the Champ once again kick out on the two-count. Tasting the Federation Title, Bret climbed to the second rope, planning to drop an elbow on the beaten Champion; however, Shawn proved that resilience never dies, as he lifted his knees and caught the Hit Man in the abdomen as he flew through the air. Gasping for air, Bret was now seeing red. After picking himself up off the canvas, he charged Michaels and dumped him over the top rope. Then, as he looked back to the center of the ring... there stood Sid. Out-maneuvering the big man, Bret caught Sid in the Sharpshooter and stretched the Sycho for dear life. With Shawn apparently laid out on the arena floor, the belt was now Bret's. Nothing could stop him now, unless it was... Steve Austin.

Like a wild boar, Austin jumped Bret, forcing the Hit Man to break what appeared to be the hold that would win him the title. Then, just as quickly as he'd entered, Austin raced back to the locker room, having accomplished his dirty deed for the day. It was now all but over. Sid was a Powerbomb away from becoming the World Wrestling Federation Champion for a second time. As he set the Hit Man up for his deadly finish, Bret was somehow, some way able to reach deep down inside and reverse the move into a crippling Sharpshooter. Sid screamed in agony. He was finished, and Bret Hart was to become the Federation Champion for a fourth time. UNTIL out of nowhere... Shawn came flying off the top rope, catching Bret with a cross body block, and wrapping him up for the 1-2... 3!!!

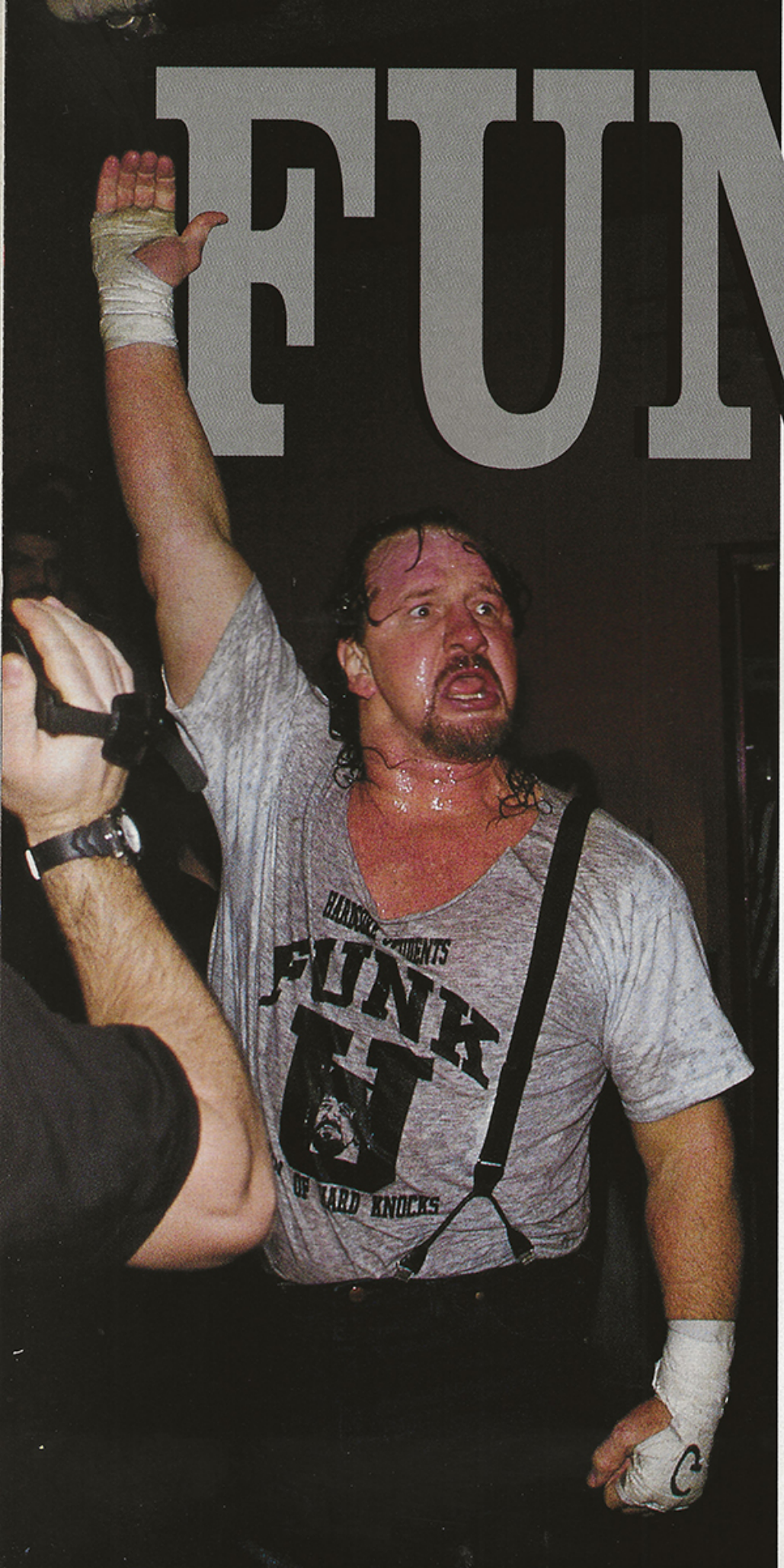
Like any wise man would, Shawn Michaels grabbed his belt and ran back to the locker room. In his mind, not only was he lucky to still be the World Wrestling Federation Champion, but... he was privileged to still be breathing! ■





(Left) On more than one occasion during the brawl, the Hit Man seemed to have Sid within inches of giving up. However, the Heartbreak Kid saved the big man—and his title—more than once. With the high-risk strategy he used against Bret during the match (top), some wonder how Shawn walked out of Toronto with all parts working. However, a 313-pound monster trying to slam him through the mat (bottom) didn't help Michaels' cause either!

FUNK



A Funked-

Terry Funk's Federation Follies

Terry Funk, the madman from the Double Cross Ranch near Amarillo, Texas, has always been considered one of the most unstable—as well as technically proficient—superstars in World Wrestling Federation history. In fact, his rambunctious ring style and rowdy demeanor have made him a legend not only in the wrestling profession, but in the motion picture business.

When Funk and his brother Dory Funk, Jr., then known as "Hoss", made their way to the Federation in the mid-1980s, fans at the time weren't ready for such a wild tag team. In simple terms, they destroyed any force that had the temerity to oppose them.

Their savage ring style soon caught the attention of Federation officials. They warned the Funks on several occasions, but their demands for modification fell on deaf ears. The straw that

ED UP!

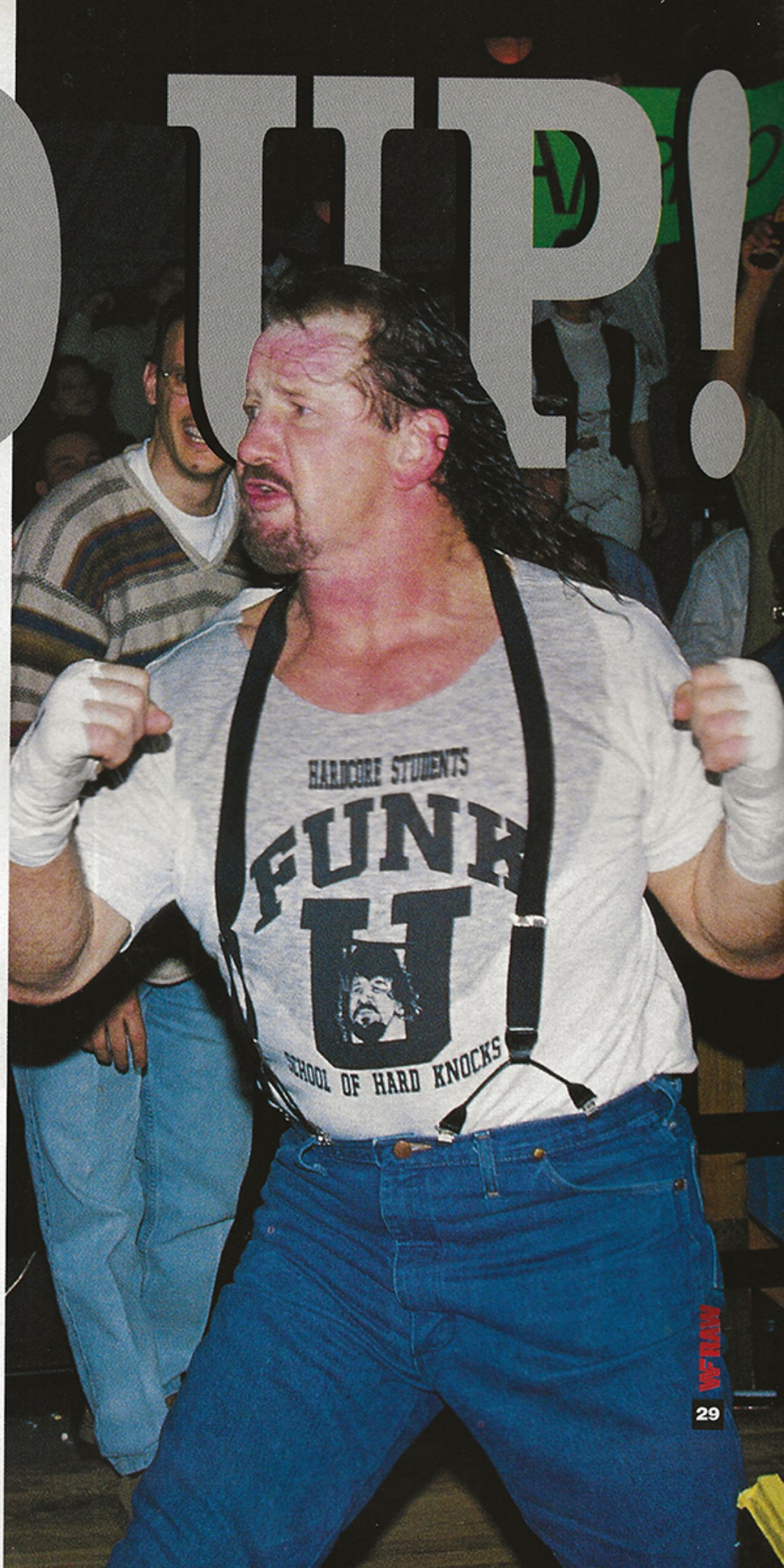
-Up Weekend

By Lou Gianfriddo

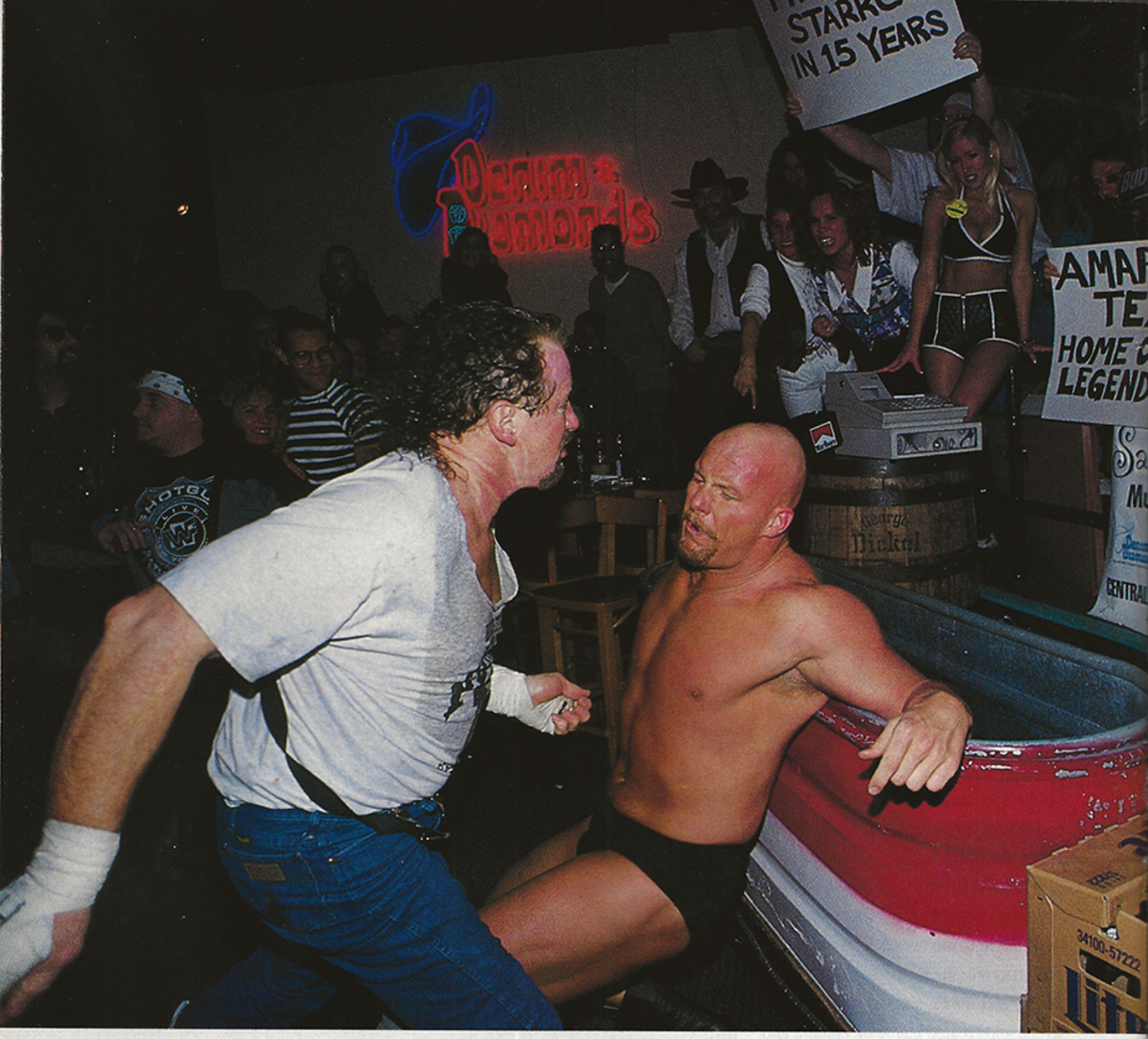
broke the camel's back, say many Federation insiders, occurred when Terry Funk hog-tied and branded a Federation ring announcer.

For his actions, Terry was suspended from Federation warfare, as was his brother. Not long after leaving the Federation, Funk erupted onto the big screen and created havoc on camera and off the set of *Roadhouse*—the film that starred Patrick Swayze. *RAW Magazine* received reports that Funk was abusive to his fellow actors and crew members.

Hollywood couldn't handle Funk's wild behavior. Despite his rugged appearance and genuine acting ability, producers would shudder whenever casting agents mentioned Funk's name



Back in his home state of Texas, Terry Funk caused absolute chaos when he appeared live—and uncensored—on *Shotgun Saturday Night*.



(Above) Funk and Steve Austin took it to each other, practically dismantling "Denim and Diamonds", while the next day (right) the proprietor of the Double Cross Ranch rekindled an old feud with the deranged Mankind.

for forthcoming movie parts. His brutal outbursts, say those close to the film business, make Hollywood bad boys like Charlie Sheen and Mickey Rourke look like "angels".

In January 1997, Terry Funk made his infamous return to the World Wrestling Federation the weekend of the *Royal Rumble*. First, Funk appeared on *Shotgun Saturday Night*, and his presence has left an indelible mark on the Federation ever since. For one—in part because of Funk's behavior—*Shotgun* was pulled from its live slot by its Long Island syndicate, WLNY.

As soon as Funk stepped into the ring, he was looking for a fight. He wanted someone, a wrestler—although he wasn't specific—to "rumble" with him on *Shotgun*. Then, true to form, Funk launched into a tirade so graphic in nature that we can only print excerpts here.

"There's not an athlete in the Federation who wants to rumble with me," he said, a day before the *Royal Rumble*. "There's not a man in WCW—those egg-sucking scumbags—who wants to rumble."

He didn't stop there. Looking for...

no, desperate for, a fight he began to insult anyone within earshot. He called Federation head Vince McMahon "a yankee bastard", in an attempt to raise McMahon's ire to the boiling point. Funk even went so far as to call Todd Pettengill's mother a name so atrocious that in fairness to Todd, we won't publish it.

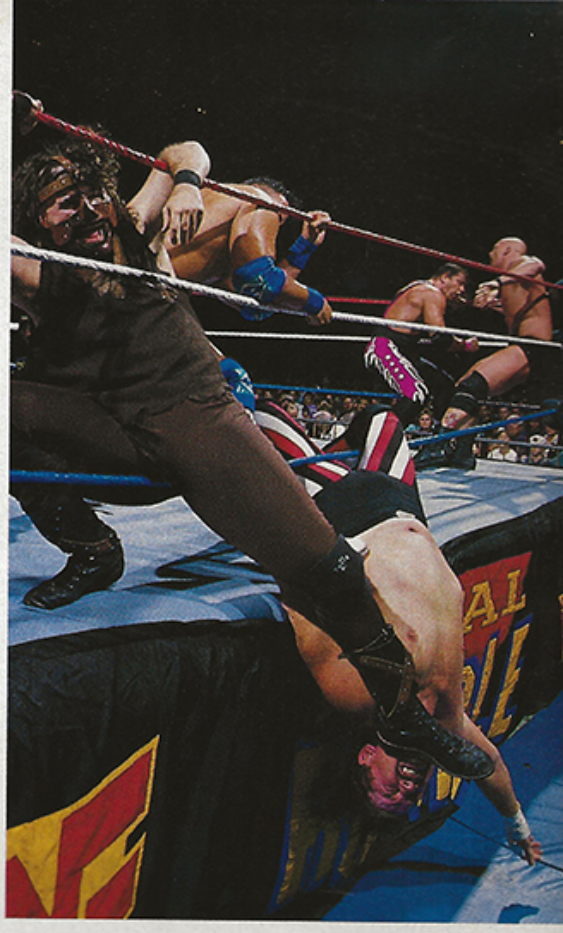
Finally, Funk spotted Stone Cold Steve Austin, who was at ringside calling *Shotgun* with McMahon and Jim Ross. With his temper rising, Funk leapt from the ring, muscled his way through the crowd and challenged Austin to a fight. Austin, who is Funk's equal in terms of tenacity, vacated his position and met Funk in the ring. Funk insulted Stone Cold and slapped him several times. With each slap, Austin's body pulsated with building rage, until he finally snapped and began to hammer his fellow Texan with abandon. Although the melee was interrupted by brave Federation officials and referees, Funk promised to even the score the following night at the *Rumble*.

By the time Funk entered the fray, Austin had already wrestled for 30 minutes. The second that Funk entered the ring, he picked up where he'd left off at *Shotgun*. Sensing that Austin was battered, Funk zeroed in for the kill. He tore into Stone Cold with left jabs and uppercuts.

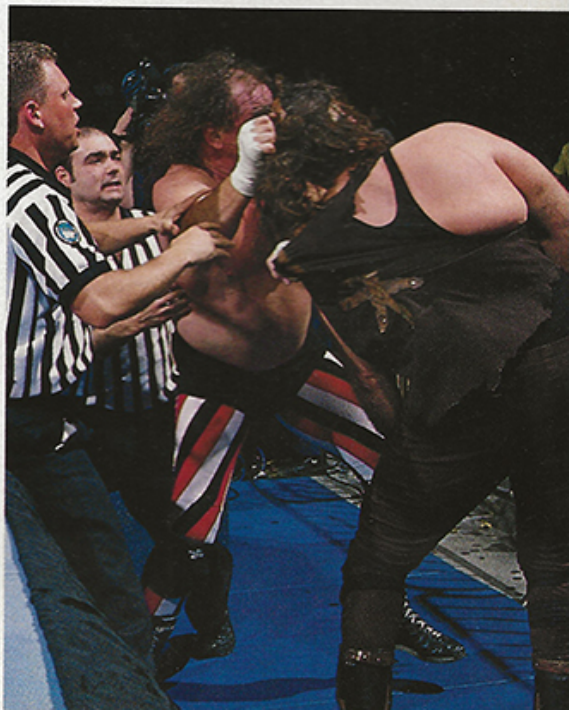
But Funk wasn't satisfied with only Austin. As the match wore on, he tangled with Bret, Rocky Maivia and Mankind when they eventually entered the match. Funk was fighting anyone within his reach. He didn't care. If someone moved and that someone was within striking distance, Funk would haul off and crack the victim with a punishing blow.

So it went for the next several minutes. It was hard to focus on Funk. A man of tremendous resilience, one instant he would be at the business end of a Flash Funk splash, while seconds later he'd be in control, leveling Mankind with a DDT or standing toe to toe with the mastodon Vader. But even Funk's tireless campaign to dispatch everyone had to come to an end.

Although Funk had managed to stun him earlier in the match, Mankind

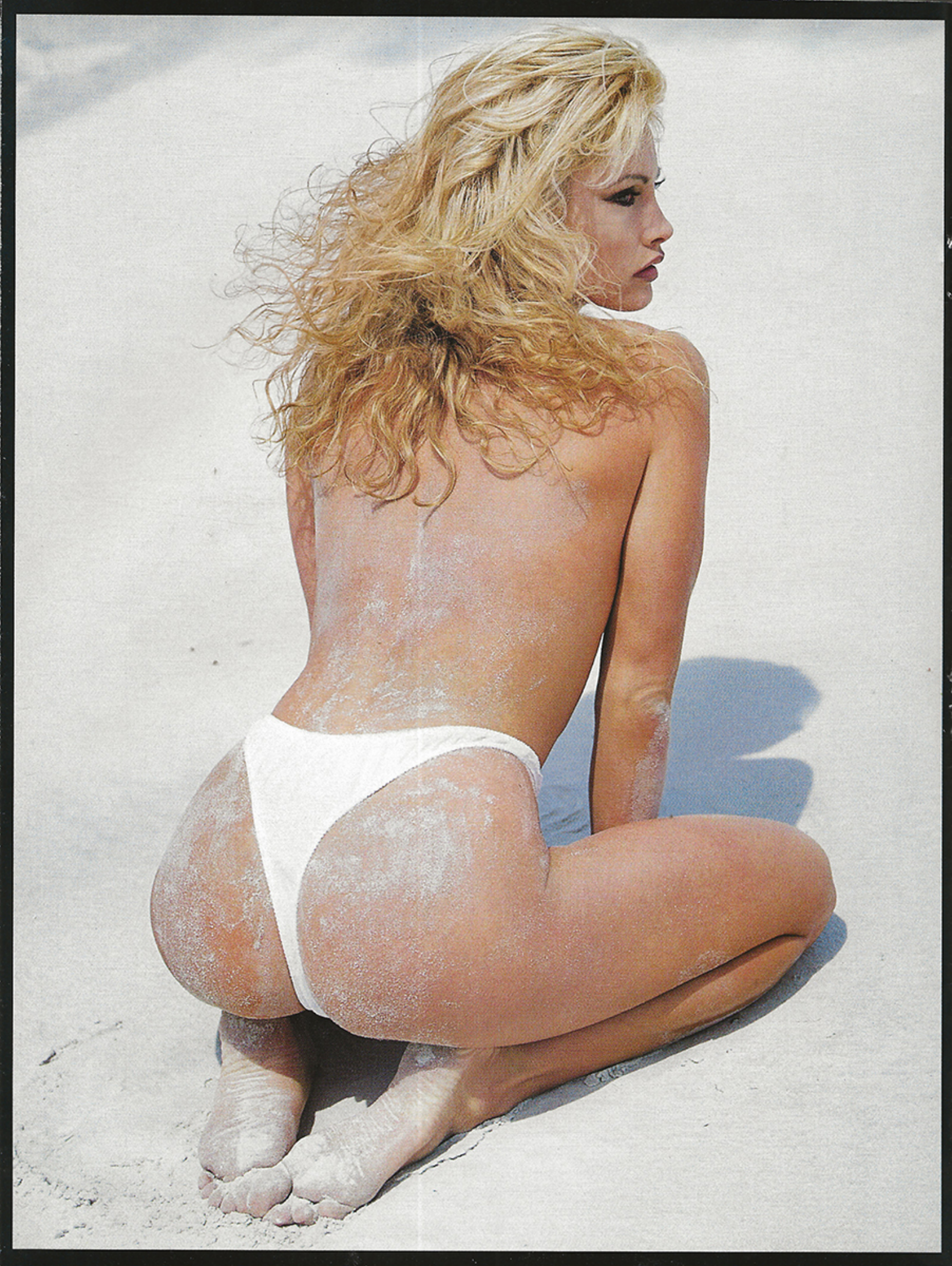


recovered and suplexed Funk from the apron to the cement floor below. But that wasn't the end of Funk. When Mankind was deposited on the floor, he and Funk battled one another like feeding sharks—each man hopeful that the other would fall at his feet. For Funk, there was no other way. In fact, he couldn't think of a better way to spend the remainder of his Sunday night. ■



LEATHER OR LACE?

MAY/JUNE 1997



A photo essay by Rich Freeda

In the case of the luscious Sable, there are two faces in the mirror.

Upon her arrival in the World Wrestling Federation, we were introduced to a graceful, soft, purring kitten. A vision of beauty who innocently stood in silence next to her man, the Wildman Marc Mero. She was there to serve as his soul mate. His inspiration. The wind beneath his wings.

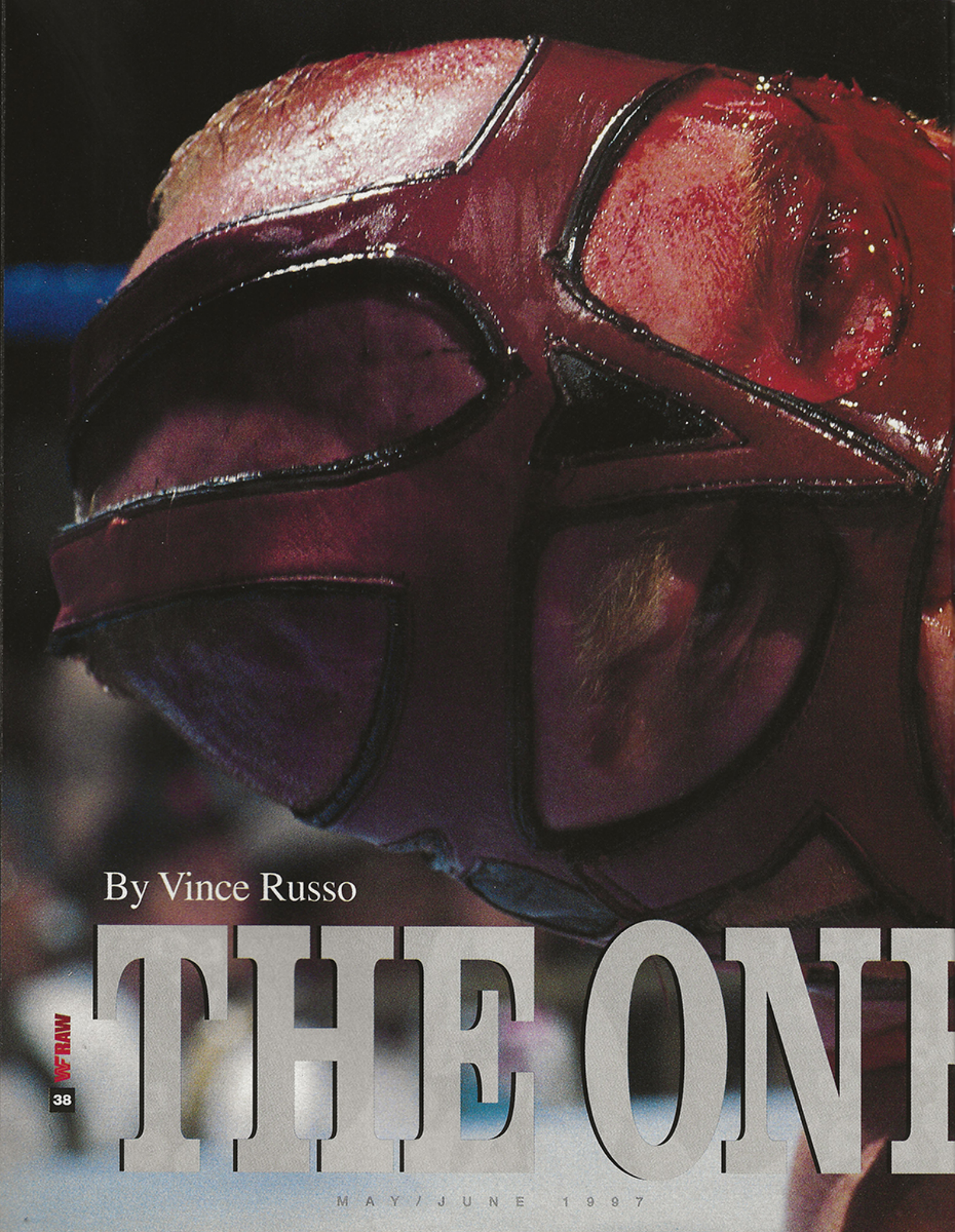
THEN... THE TRANSFORMATION.

Call it a case of "Cat Scratch Fever", but following an episode of *Shotgun Saturday Night* that saw Sable verbally get into it with her Wildman, the purring kitten showed up on the next installment of *Monday Night RAW* as a ferocious, biting lioness. Clad in leather, she took it to Mero's opponents once they spilled to the outside of the ring—her domain. In one near-death experience, Sable even took it upon herself to spin-kick the Undertaker. Yes, the UNDERTAKER. Still his inspiration... she now burned with intensity as the fire in his flame!

In this photo essay taken exclusively by the photographer of the Federation starlets, Rich Freeda, you will see shocking frames of the beautiful Sable. Some taken when she first entered the Federation, others... when she turned the deadly claw.

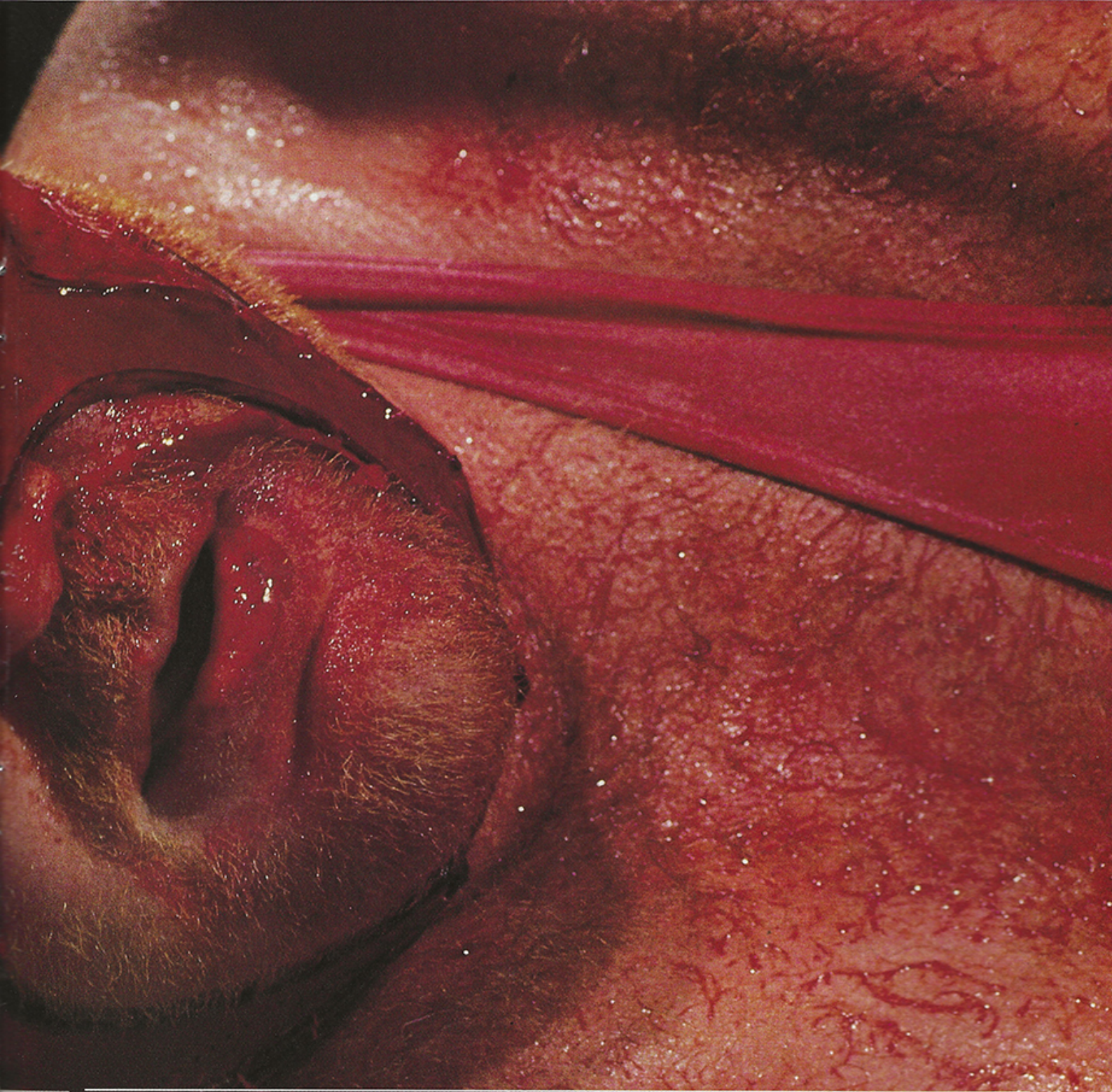
Leather, or lace?

You decide.



By Vince Russo

THE ONE



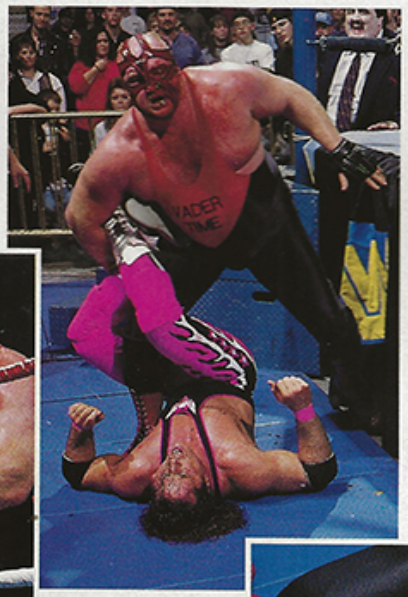
The Match That Will Change Vader's Life Forever

To those destined for immortality, there usually comes a moment in their careers when that one match transforms them from "great athletes with promise" into "genuine superstars". It happened to Bret Hart the night he upset Ric Flair in Saskatchewan, Canada, to become the World Wrestling Federation Champion for the first time. Shawn Michaels experienced the same when he climbed to the heights of Madison Square Garden via ladder at *WrestleMania X*. Then there was the evening that the Undertaker defeated Hulk Hogan... at a

(Below) Although Vader's vision was dulled by a sea of crimson red, the pink and black attack known as the Excellence of Execution could do little to stop the raging bull... and in the end, it was the Undertaker who dumped the bloody monster over the top rope.

time when in reality no one could. And, as for Stone Cold Steve Austin? His transition came the first night he dodged the editing machine by speaking his mind live on an episode of *Monday Night RAW*.

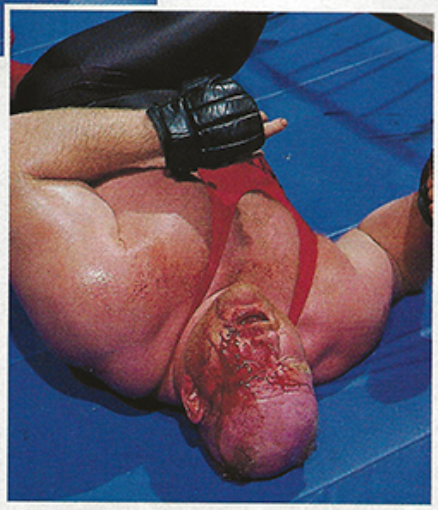
When the "Man They Call Vader" set hoof into the World Wrestling Federation, many said that by the time his reign of terror was complete, he would truly go down as a legend in his own time. Having conquered World Championship Wrestling and IWGP in Japan, Vader was already labeled a "genuine superstar", but if he could get over that last hurdle and prove himself in the big league—the World Wrestling Federation—then he would demand the label of "icon". And you could bet... nobody would deny him. It was inevitable. It was only a matter of time.



Vader debuted in impressive fashion at the 1996 *Royal Rumble*. Unfamiliar with the competition, he dominated the melee until he was eliminated by Shawn Michaels, as he and the 500-plus-pound Yokozuna battled it out too close to the ropes. Furious over his failure to win, Vader took it out on then interim-Federation President Gorilla Monsoon the following night, by nailing the Hall of Famer with a crippling Vader Splash.

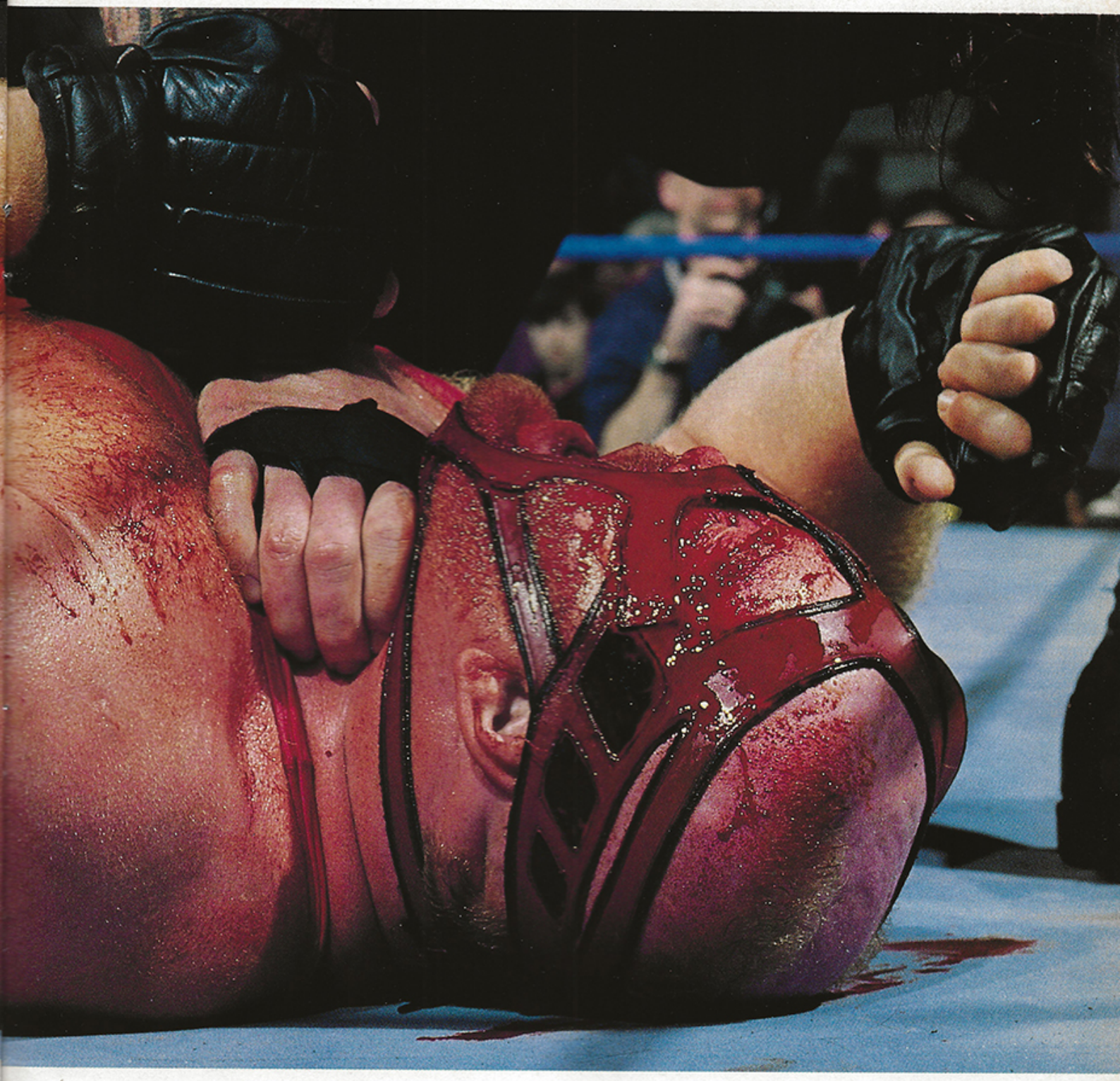
Vader had arrived. Now... it was only a matter of time.

Throughout the rest of the winter and into the spring, Vader's tirade of terror on the World Wrestling Federation continued. His most noteworthy victories came over the mighty Yokozuna. A vicious feud that Vader put to rest by cracking the Sumo's leg, again courtesy of his devastating splash. The Mastodon was on a roll, but that one victory that would enroll him into the class of "legend" seemed to elude him.



But, we all knew... it was only a matter of time.

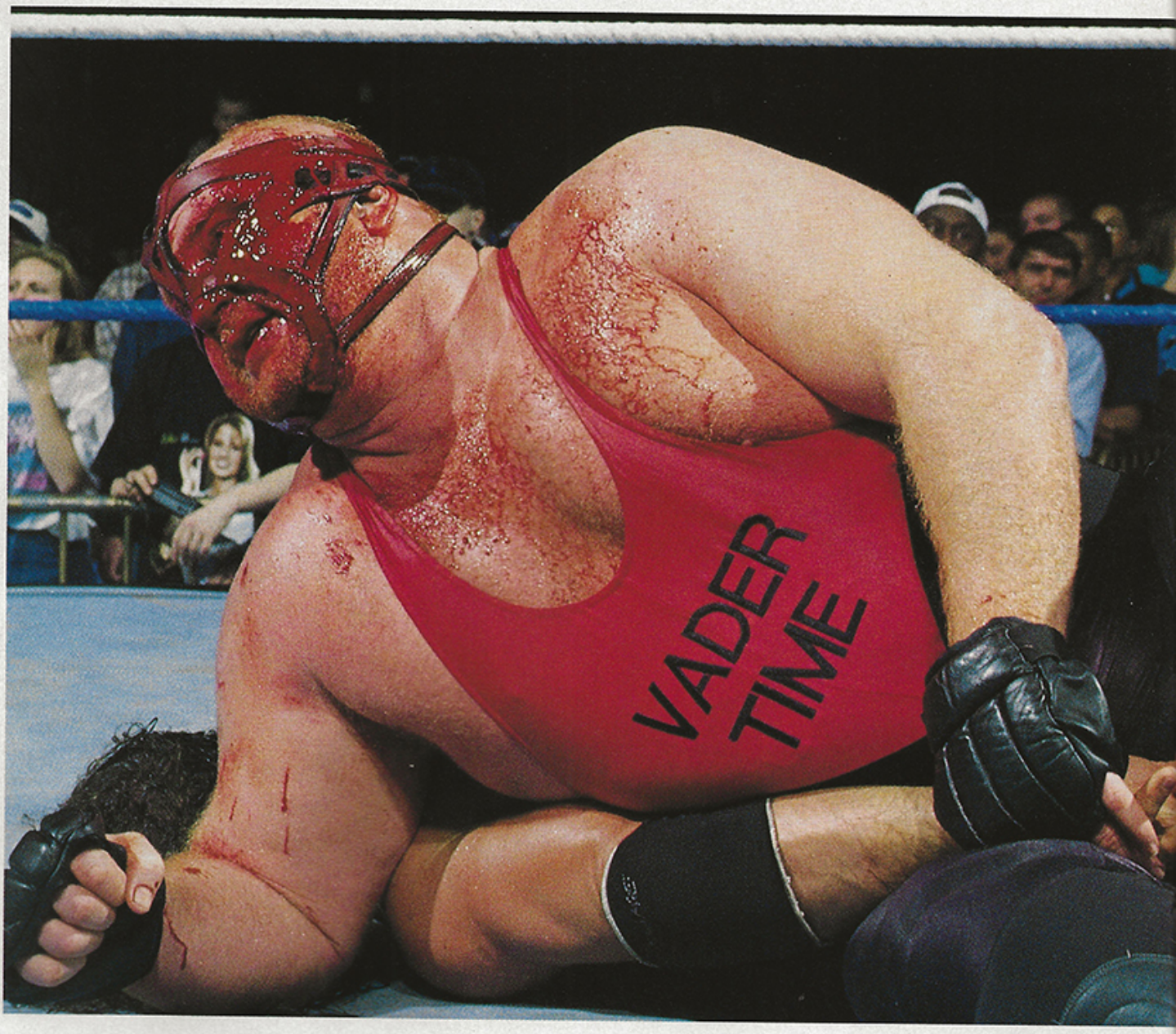
The spring turned into summer, and with it would come that one match... or so we thought. Scheduled to meet Shawn Michaels at *SummerSlam* for the World Wrestling Federation Title, many critics, including yours truly, pinpointed this night as THE ONE. The match in which Vader would declare... his own immortality. And, it may have happened too, had it not been for James E. Cornette. On that hot August night in Cleveland, Vader had the Champion beaten on two occasions, but Cornette, his obnoxious mouthpiece, insisted the match go on until it was decided by a pin. Oh, in the end, it was decided by a pin alright. Unfortunately, it was the weary shoulders of Vader that were found glued to the canvas. Instead of being THE ONE, this loss instead devastated Vader. For the next five months, the Rocky Mountain Bulldozer just wasn't the same. Depression set in and weight gain soon followed. It got to the point when the thoroughbred could



Bleeding like a "stuck mastodon", Vader discovered that when the Grim Reaper smells blood he goes for the jugular.

barely pull an apple cart.

With the success that he had once known, retirement had to be on the mind of Vader. He had to be asking himself the questions that one often asks in the twilight of one's career. Have I reached my peak? Are my better days behind me? Is my time up? After doing some extensive soul searching, Vader soon came up with the answers to his questions... a resounding NO! Analyzing his situation, Vader came to the realization that his failures weren't attributable to himself at all. No, what he was suffering from was mismanagement. Looking at James E. Cornette, Vader reached the conclusion that, rather than educating him and preparing him for the competition in the World Wrestling Federation, Cornette was more concerned with "when pay



With one of his eyes ripped completely open, Vader still found the strength to attempt to make the Hit Man submit. Because the Mastodon wouldn't seek medical help until after the match, all four participants wore a shade of red back to the locker room.

day was"! In Vader's own words, the misguiding manager was simply a "leech who was just sucking the blood out of him."

In an effort to get back on track, Vader looked extensively for the brain who could support his brawn. In his mind he knew that only one man was capable... Paul Bearer. Vader had seen first hand what Bearer had done for the careers of the Undertaker and Mankind, and he soon concluded that if his time was going to come, it would have to be the ghoulish Gatekeeper who was winding his clock. After a handshake sealed the deal, Vader had not only new management... but a new attitude.

In the weeks that followed, Vader kept his relationship with Bearer a secret... until it could be revealed at the "appropriate time". Under the guidance of the Gatekeeper, Vader ferociously hit the gym, dropping "a small child" (50 pounds) prior to his *Royal Rumble* engagement with the Undertaker. As the world would soon find out, Vader was back in business, and again... it was only a matter of time.

The Mastodon shocked the world when he unveiled Bearer at the *Rumble*, and then proceeded to upset the Undertaker. Even though the new-fangled Vader won the contest, it just didn't seem to be THE ONE. Because of Bearer's interference, the victory was somewhat tainted. However—tainted or

not—the fire was clearly back in Vader's eyes. And, it burned with yet an even stronger intensity as Vader managed to survive to the final four of the *Royal Rumble*. Yes, it could have been THE ONE... had it not been for the chicanery of Stone Cold Steve Austin, who illegitimately disposed of him—and everybody else—over the top rope.

February 16, 1997. This had to be THE ONE. The stage was set for the Mastodon to shine. He had Austin, the Undertaker and Bret Hart in the ring... all at the same time. Yes, this was going to be World War III, and Vader's guns were fully loaded.

After leaving the ring resembling a slaughterhouse, the Rocky Mountain Monster was quickly sewn back up by the Chattanooga emergency medical technicians in the locker room.

Words can't describe Vader's performance that night... but the pictures on these pages surely can. Vader punished his adversaries, but in return... he paid a severe price. Early into the match, a chair meant for the Undertaker was kicked back into his own face, opening up a huge gash on the side of his left eye. A crimson river flowed from the opening, blinding the gladiator as he struggled just to keep his bearings. A lesser man would have thrown in the towel, but not Vader. No, this was going to be THE ONE... and, he was going to make sure of it. Masked in red, Vader battled for his life, as his eye began to swell shut. Like a pack of vultures smelling death, all three opponents berated the blood-soaked area with a barrage of punches and kicks... but Vader wouldn't quit. He had to be going on instinct, because there just couldn't be anything left. After Austin was eliminated, there were only three. THE ONE was only two men away. It was within his grasp. Vader could taste it.

After miraculously surviving a "Hit Man" Sharpshooter, Vader's adrenaline began to pump at a feverish pitch. Sensing his immortality, he took it to the Undertaker, dropping the Dead Man to the canvas. After pulling Taker's beaten carcass to the corner, there was only one thing left to do... you guessed it, VADER BOMB! But, as the Mastodon perched himself on the second rope, the Undertaker caught him with an act of desperation to the groin, dropping him over the top rope to the arena floor. It was over for Vader. He had lost. But, in defeat... this was clearly THE ONE.

The World Wrestling Federation "Final Four" MADE Vader. In that one night he proved that he is what everybody thought he could be. With his own blood he had scripted his name in the World Wrestling Federation Book of Legends.

That one match. THE ONE that made him. THE ONE that he, and everybody else, will never forget. ■

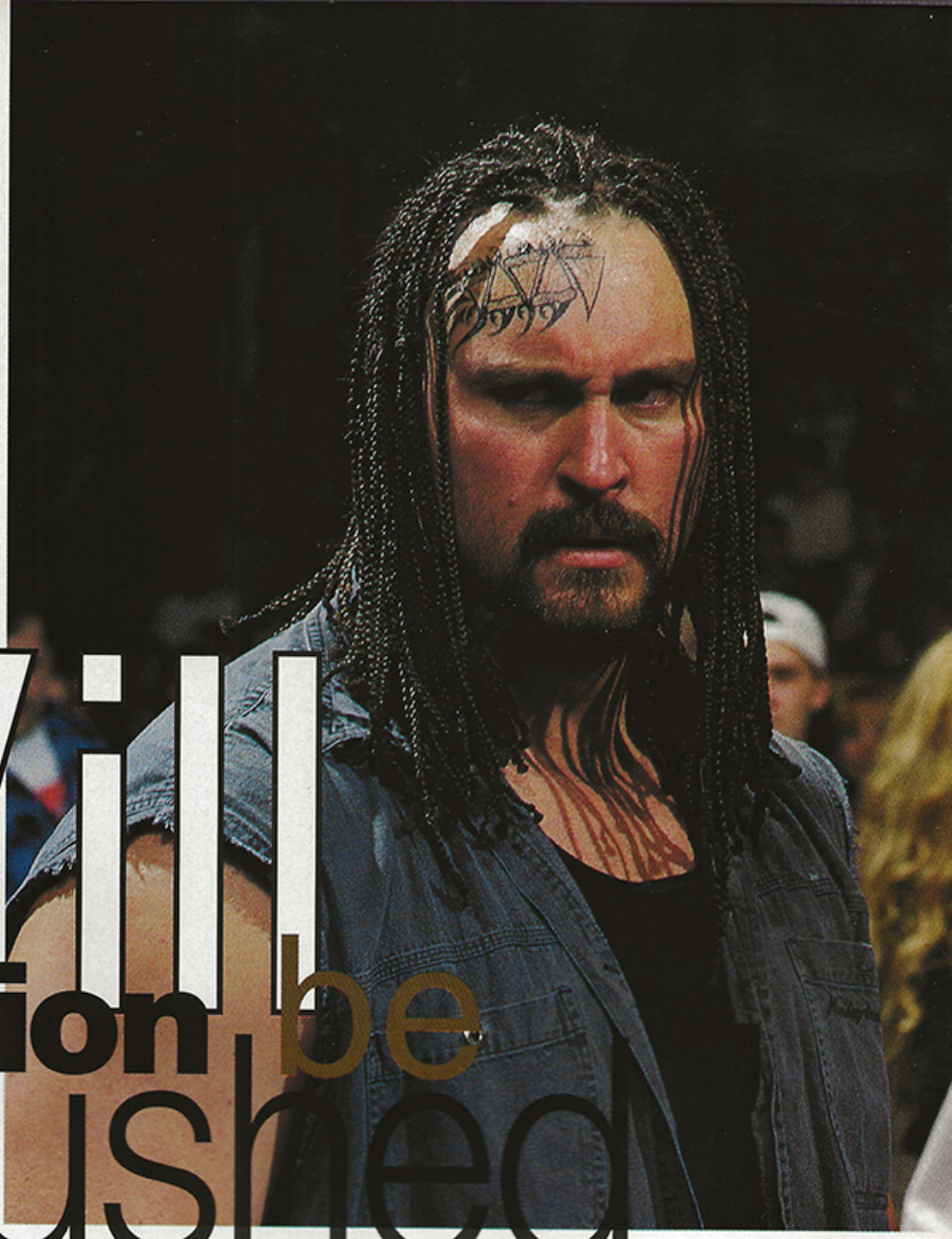
RAGE!!!

On the *Monday Night RAW* 24 hours after the controversial ending of the *Royal Rumble*, Stone Cold Steve Austin and Bret "Hit Man" Hart got into quite a brawl after Austin 3:16 labeled the Excellence of Execution a "cry baby".

In this exclusive *RAW Magazine* photo, the Hit Man violently rips out Austin's face, while Stone Cold returns the painful favor by attempting to manually scalp the "Hit Man".

An unbeatable, punishing army on the outside, will the "Nation of Domination" self-destruct and crumble from the inside?

This just in!!!



Will the "nation" be crushed from the inside out?

A **Special** Report **by the Informer**

In the current issue of *World Wrestling Federation Magazine*, Editor-in-Chief Vince Russo wrote a commentary concerning the "GENIUS" of one Clarence Mason. In the article, Mr. Russo stated that "Clarence Mason was not only underrated, but perhaps the MVP of the World Wrestling Federation." Now, whereas Russo's statements are both debatable and highly controversial, the fact is that Mason has had a tremendous impact on the Federation since joining its ranks! HOWEVER, just how brilliant or valuable is Mr. Mason? Well, that question may be answered soon enough as my informants inform me, the Informer, that the fast-talking prosecutor may soon be challenged with the biggest HEADACHE of his career!!!

"WE ARE THE NATION... OF DOMINATION!!!

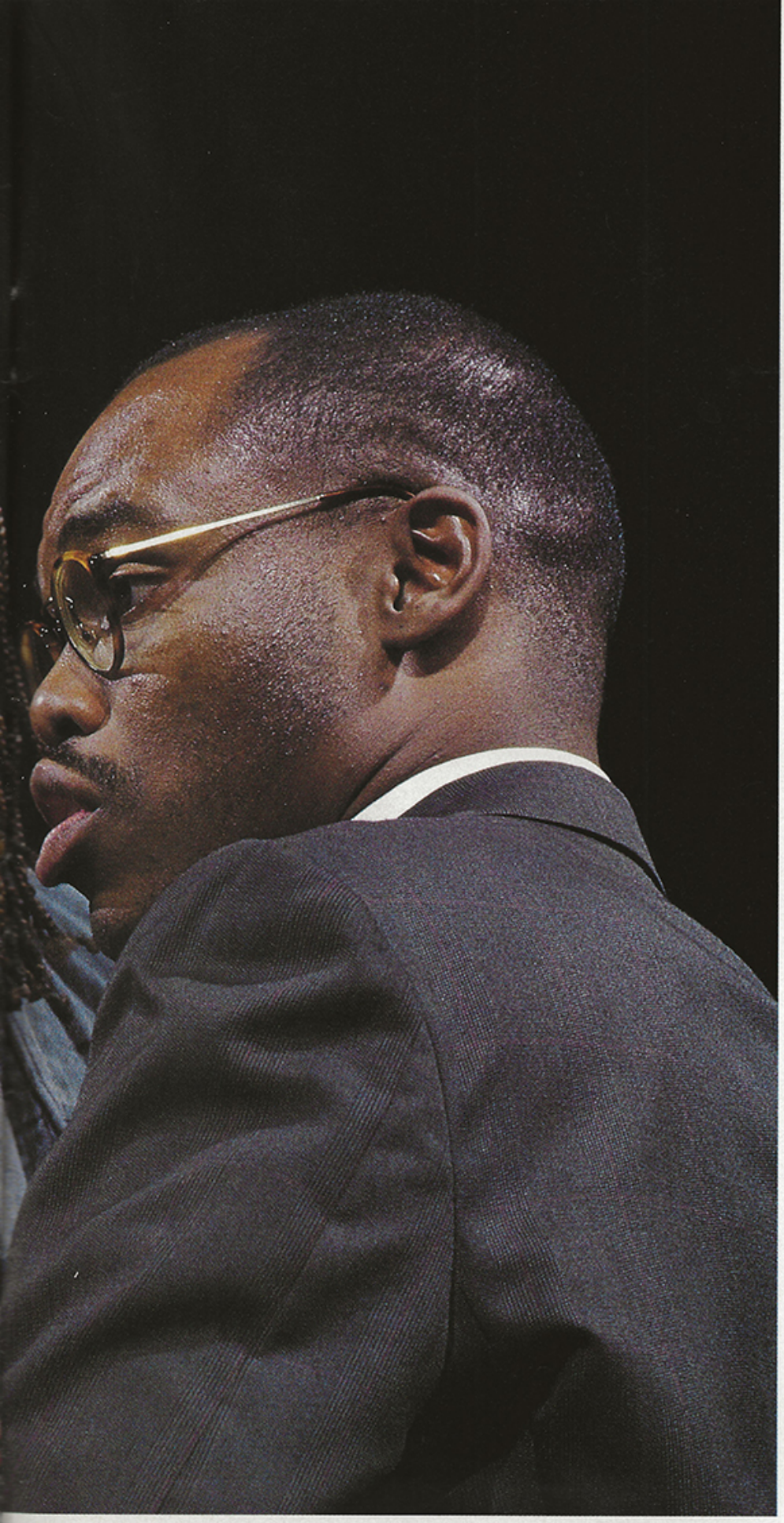
We all know the song! That war cry has been pounding throughout the ranks of the Federation for some time now.

Even though Clarence Mason was responsible for getting Crush reinstated in the World Wrestling Federation, many insiders feel that since the birth of the "Nation", Crush feels like he has become Mason's unwanted stepchild.

A vicious gang of jackals seeing that they get what they want, when they want it... by any means necessary. A force whose backbone is built on UNITY! United they stand... and... divided they may fall.

That's right!!! Sources tell me, the Informer, that the fall of the empire known as the Nation of Domination may not come from the hands of an outside force, but rather the mitts of one of its own!!!

Believe it, or not, word on the street has it that Crush may have had enough with not only Clarence Mason, but his entire unruly court as well!!! You don't believe me? Then let's look at the facts! Looking to get reinstated back into the Federation, Crush called on the best legal council that his MONEY could buy... Clarence Mason. Keep in mind, at the time Crush didn't have much money of his own, so he made an agreement with the aggressive lawyer that if in fact he was reinstated, Mason would be entitled to a healthy percentage of all the money earned by Crush in the Federation. After the two agreed on a



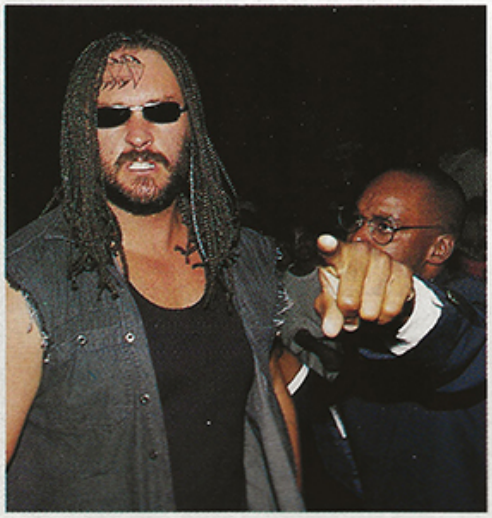
number, all seemed well between client and attorney... at least for the time being.

Enter the Nation of Domination.

With the birth of the ideology known as the Nation of Domination, everything seemed to change for Clarence Mason... including his relationship with Crush. No longer did the almighty dollar fuel Mason's madness, but rather his soul was now driven by a "purpose". In his mind, his life became a mission. He was the prophet solely responsible for spreading the "Word of the Nation". In the eyes of many, Crush took a back seat... as Clarence Mason drove the bus of righteousness.

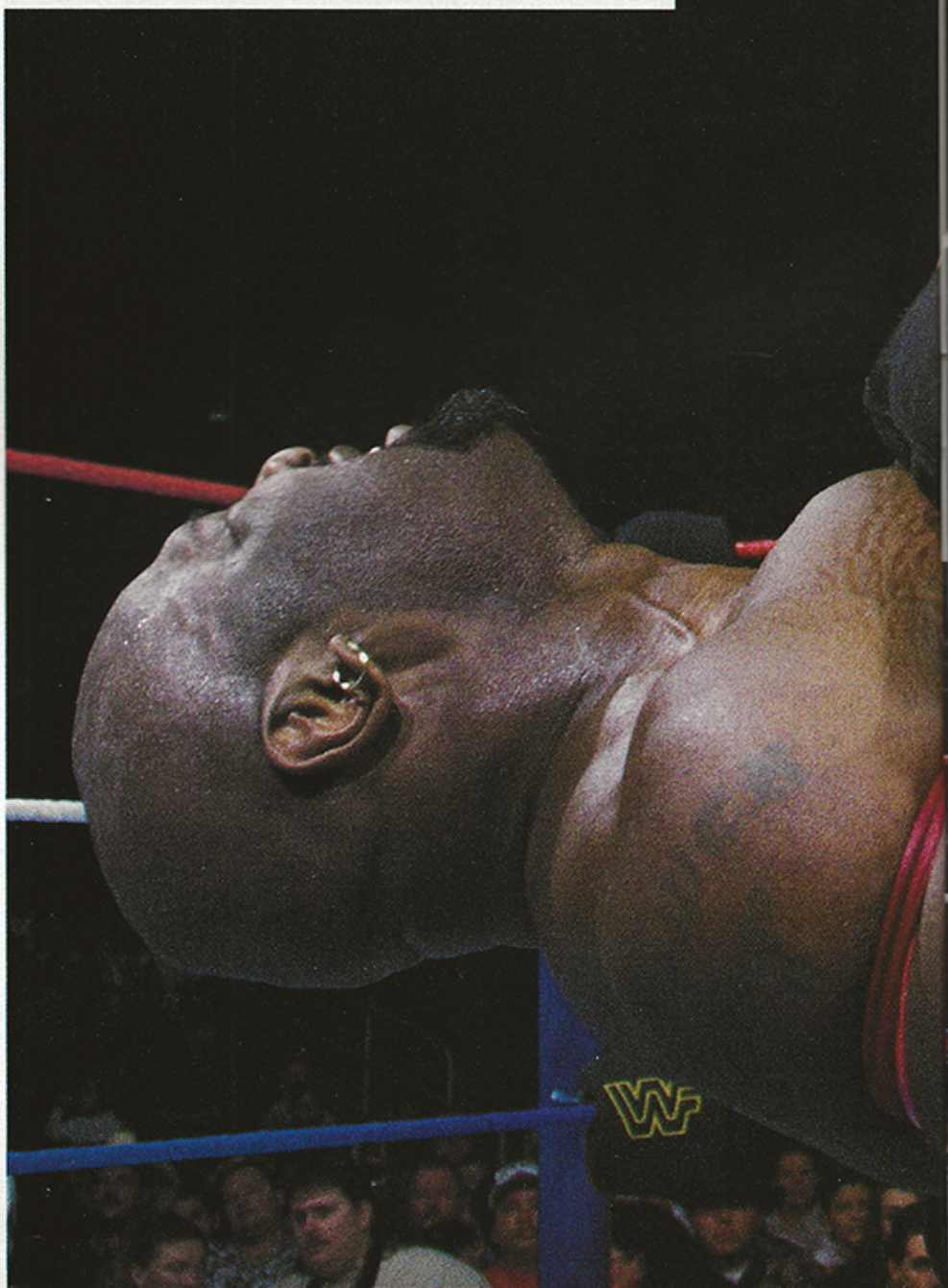
As more passengers jumped on the N.O.D. bandwagon, Crush seemed to be pushed further and further back toward the caboose. Now, even though he isn't known as a "spotlight kinda guy", here is where Crush's patience may have begun to wear thin. This isn't what he and Clarence had agreed on... it wasn't even close!!! But, being the team player that he was... Crush continued to field his position without ever uttering a word. That is until... he started getting hit in the wallet.

Over the course of less than a month, Crush was involved in three grueling matches with the Undertaker, Ahmed Johnson and Sycho Sid, all of which he COULD have won. However, due to the Nation waiting to make a statement... Crush was DQ'd from all three. The losses may not only have affected the big man's pride, but perhaps more important... his bank account. No win... no pay! As Clarence and the Nation were making giant strides forward, Crush appeared to be reeling backwards. Some even say... perhaps into personal bankruptcy!!!

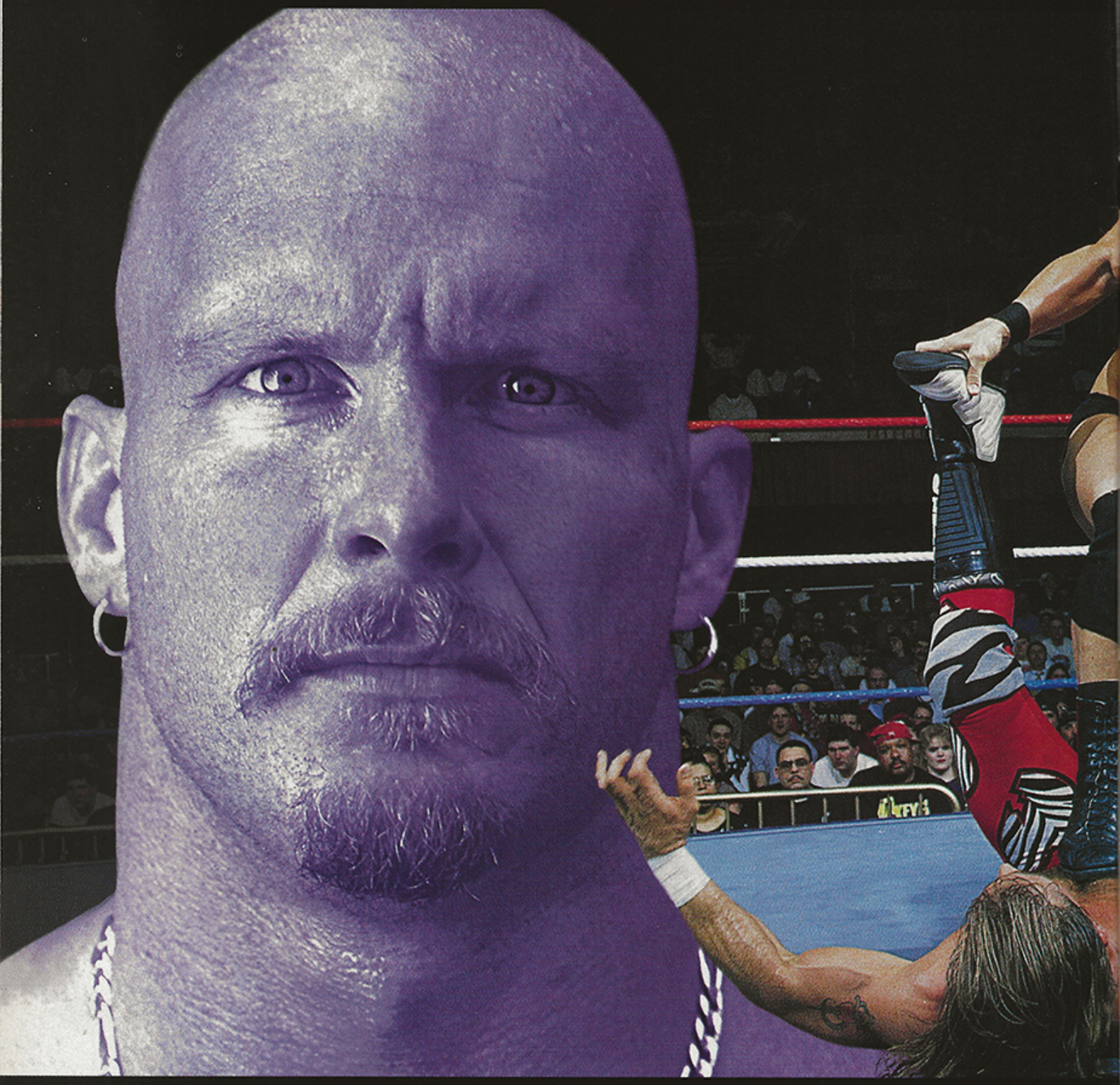


Now, taking the old adage, "A man's gotta do what a man's got to do," you tell me—WHAT DOES CRUSH GOTTA DO? My informants have informed me, the Informer, that Crush may have already made his concerns known to Mason, only to receive in return the best lip service that money can buy! If we go to another old adage, which says, "Actions speak louder than words", then the Nation of Domination may indeed be in danger of being "CRUSHED" from the inside out!!!

I'll keep you posted!!! ■



It appeared that Crush had Ahmed Johnson on the run, until the "Nation" interfered, costing him a healthy pay day!



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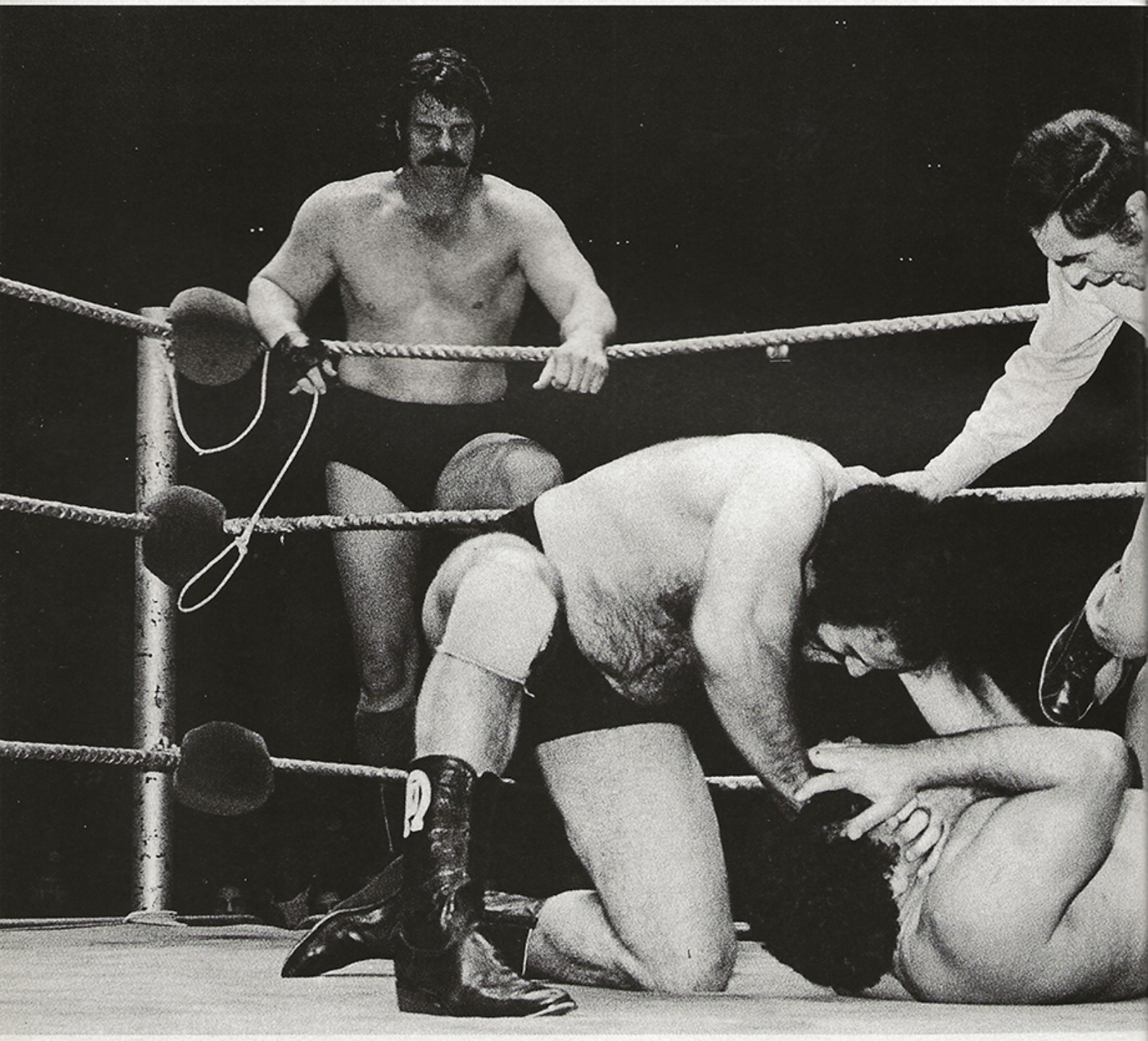

MAY/JUNE 1997

REMEMBER...

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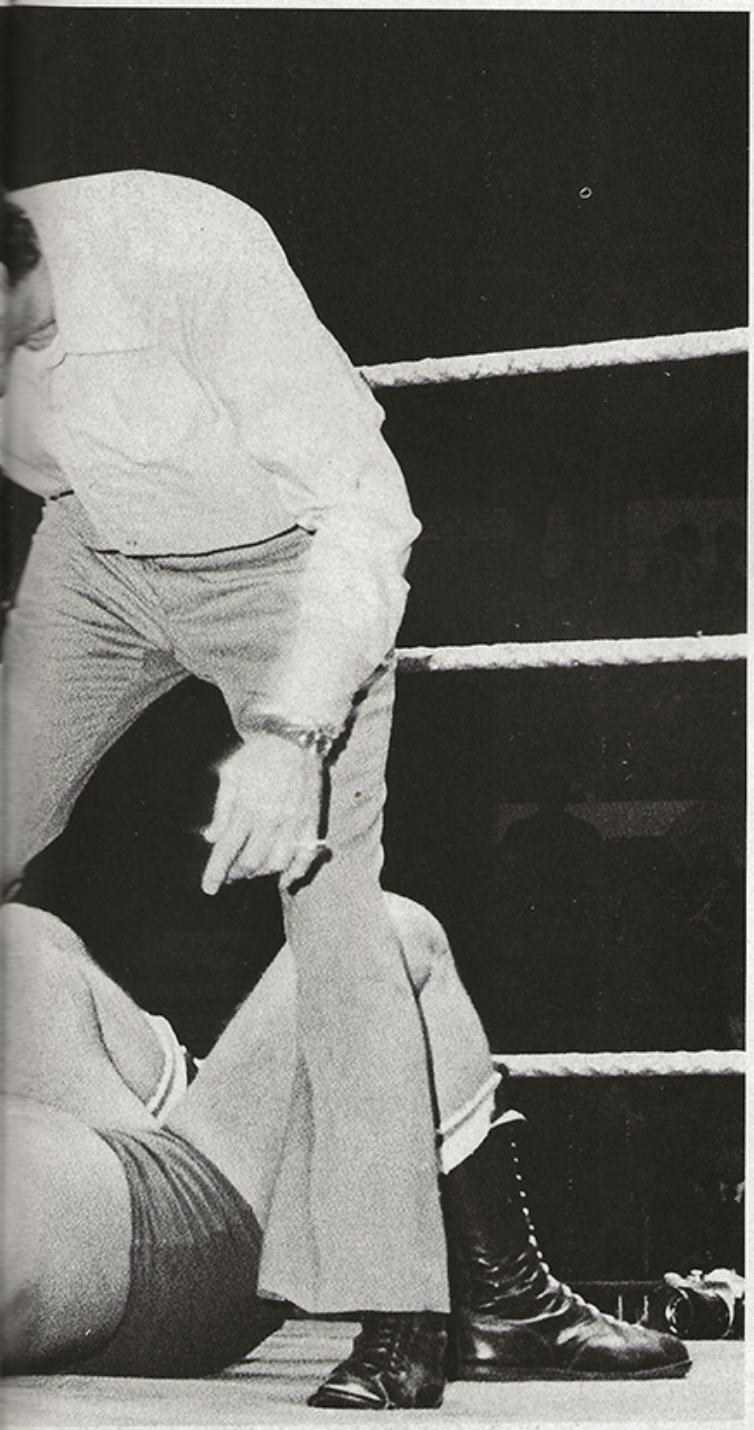


BY KEITH ELLIOT GREENBERG

THE IMAGE OF BARRY WINDHAM AND JUSTIN "HAWK" BRADSHAW ADORNED IN BLACK AND TREKKING TO THE RING, GLOVED HANDS RAISED ABOVE THEIR HEADS, CONJURES UP MEMORIES OF ANOTHER GREAT TAG TEAM, THE ORIGINAL BLACKJACKS.

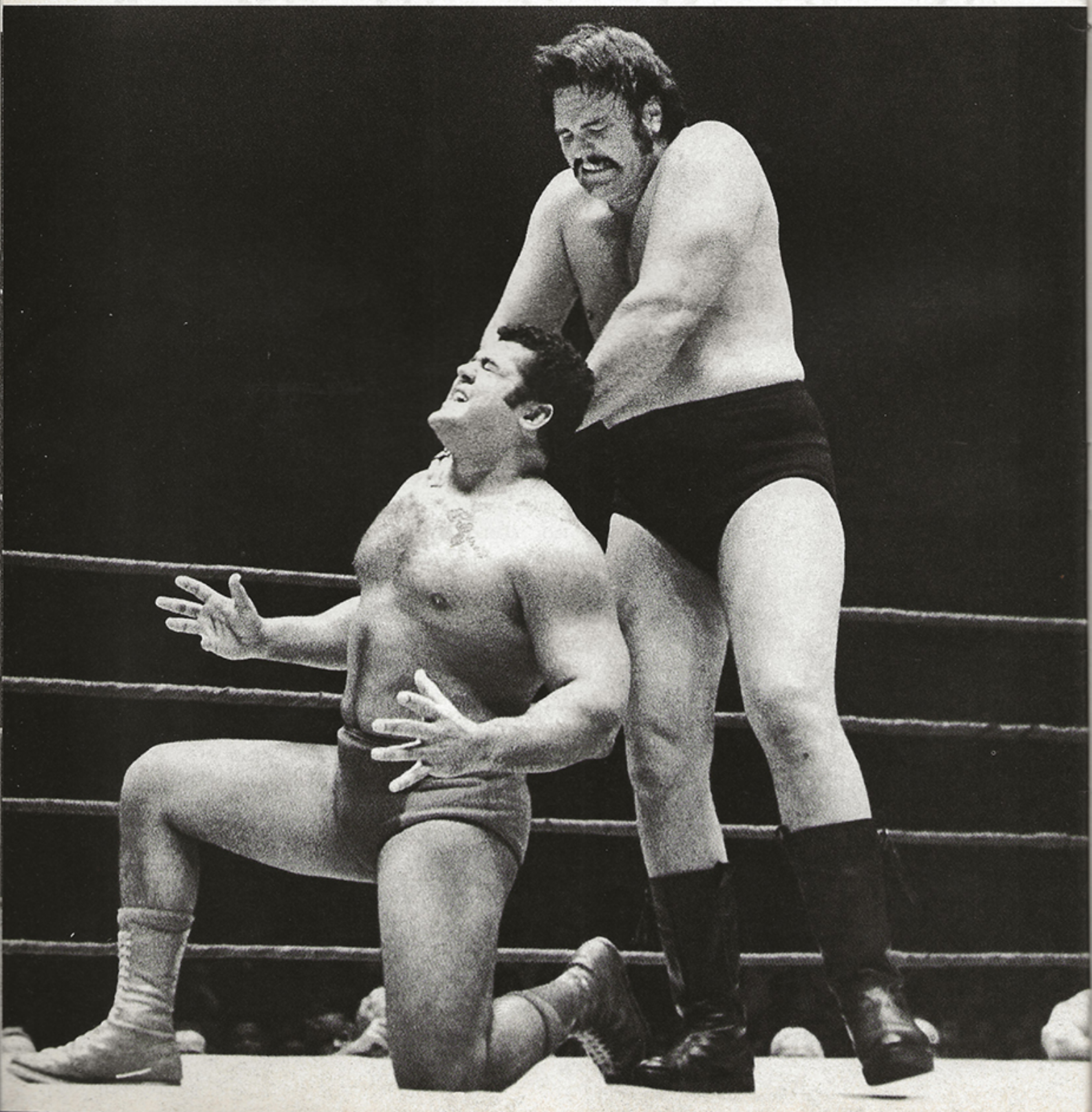
In the tag team turbulence of the mid-1970s, no tandem could measure up to the hazardous combination of Blackjack Mulligan and Blackjack Lanza. They won the World Wrestling Federation Tag Team Championship on August 26, 1975, from Dominic DeNucci and Irish Pat Barrett. And although they dropped the straps a short time later—to Louis Cerdan and Tony Parisi on November 18 of the same year—their influence in the sport of kings has never diminished (for more about their impact on the duo of Windham and Bradshaw, see the current *World Wrestling Federation Magazine*).

Lanza first appeared on the wrestling scene in 1969, beginning his career in the Indianapolis-based promotion dominated by names like Wilbur Snyder, the Crusher and Dick the Bruiser. Professional wrestling had its share of good-natured cowboys in white hats before. But Lanza was a different breed of hombre. The mustached grappler left the locker room clad in black trunks, a black leather vest and black cowboy hat. His most distinguishing piece of attire, though, was a single black glove, with the fingers cut out for maximum effectiveness when he clamped on his deadly "black claw", covering an opponent's face and squeezing the temples.

One of the most violent and rambunctious tag teams in World Wrestling Federation history, Blackjack Lanza and Blackjack Mulligan, otherwise known as the Blackjacks, punished many opponents during their reign of terror!

Within two years, another Blackjack had appeared in the World Wide Wrestling Federation: Blackjack Mulligan, a.k.a. Bob Windham, a no-nonsense wrestler who'd once competed on the professional gridiron. Now, dressed exactly like Lanza and using the same finisher, he plowed through the talent in the northeastern United States, challenging Federation Champion Pedro Morales for the title on numerous occasions.

In late 1973, the two Blackjacks joined forces in the midwest, pulverized the competition there, and took their campaign around the country, capturing the old American Wrestling Association (AWA) belts and numerous singles

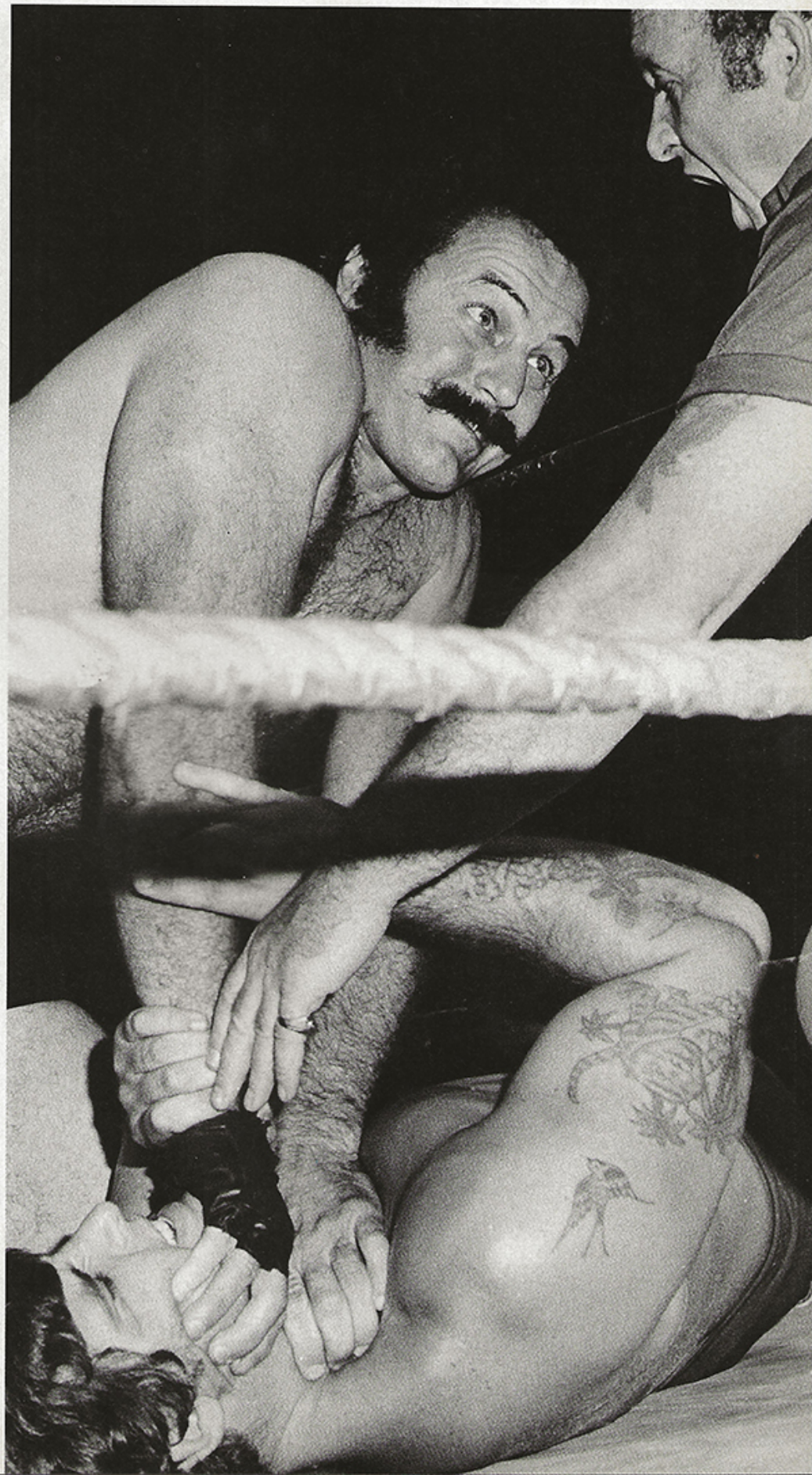


titles before scoring the most prestigious tag team prize in the World Wide Wrestling Federation. Their manager at the time, Captain Lou Albano, declared that he'd never seen a squad so innately compatible.

The only problem the Blackjacks encountered centered on their individual talents. Because they were each enormously gifted as singles wrestlers, the Blackjacks periodically split to seek personal glory. Inevitably, they'd be drawn back together, and rapidly rise to the head of the tag team division wherever they appeared.

The last time the Blackjacks performed as a tag team was in the early 1980s. Mulligan returned to the World Wrestling Federation in the middle part of the decade, frequently winning bunkhouse battle royals—matches consisting of dozens of competitors permitted to bring chains, hockey sticks and other weapons to the conflict. For a brief period, he hosted a segment on World Wrestling Federation broadcasts called "Blackjack's Barbecue". Today, he is retired and living in Florida.

Lanza battled in the squared circle for the last time in 1985. But something kept pulling him back to the action. Today, sporting a conservative business suit rather than his signature leather, he's a World Wrestling Federation front office employee, conveying his wisdom to Windham and Bradshaw, among other future superstars. ■



(Left) Standing six feet, nine inches tall, Blackjack Mulligan didn't know the meaning of the word mercy. Here he applies pressure to the neck of Pedro Morales, while his partner (right), the punishing six-foot, eight-inch Blackjack Lanza applies a gagging chokehold to the neck of Tony Garea.

THE NIGHT

THE BELT ALMOST CHANGED HANDS

The Hart Foundation vs. The Rockers

BY BILL BANKS

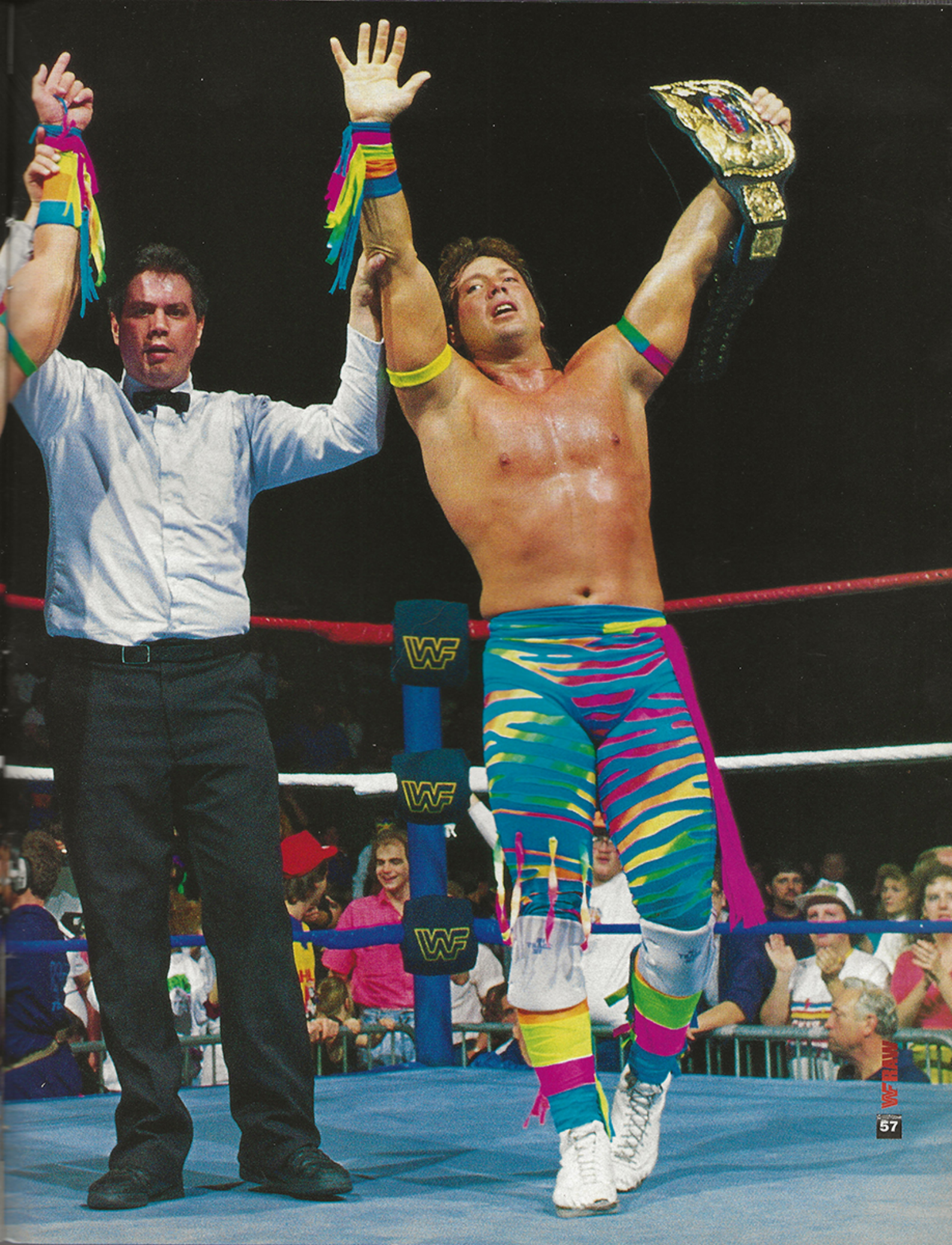
Before they were dubbed the "Excellence of Execution" and "the Heartbreak Kid", Bret Hart and Shawn Michaels were members of the two most successful tag teams (the Hart Foundation and the Rockers, respectively) to ever compete in the World Wrestling Federation. Today, even though their ex-partners Marty Jannetty and Jim "the Anvil" Neidhart are no longer in the Federation, Bret and Shawn continue the war that those two dynamic tag teams began some seven years ago.

In this *RAW Magazine* EXCLUSIVE, we will take a look at the night the Rockers won the Tag Team Title from the Hart Foundation in Fort Wayne, Indiana, back in 1990... only to be stripped of it hours later. The fact is, had it not been for the storm of controversy that poured on their parade that evening, Shawn Michaels and Marty Jannetty might have changed the course of tag team wrestling as we know it!!!

Keep in mind, up until this point, a Federation gag order has prevented these pictures from ever having been shown... ANYWHERE!!!

Apparently, they never liked each other from the start. The moment Bret and Neidhart hit the ring for this 2-out-of-3 fall contest, they ripped their tag team belts off and waved them in the direction of the Rockers. Bret looked right into the eyes of Shawn Michaels and bellowed, "These are OUR belts, understand? OURS, you PUNK!" Sporting bleached blond hair and in only his mid-twenties, Shawn Michaels seemed perturbed by the Hit Man's comments. Bret had fired the first declarations of war at the cocky youngster, and it clearly intimidated him. Soon, however, the butterflies would all but disappear as Marty and Bret locked up, triggering the start of the match.

After the first few minutes of the match, Marty found himself in a stalemate with the Hit Man, so he tagged in Shawn who attempted to confuse the future Federation Champion by leapfrogging over him twice. However, Bret's partner, the strong and stocky Jim Neidhart, wasn't buying it. Looking to put both cocky opponents in their place, "the Anvil" jumped in the ring and attempted a clothesline. Unfortunately, he was beaten to the "punch", as he was abruptly dropped by a double Rocker superkick.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After the referee reinstated "order", Marty and "the Anvil" locked arms once more. Neidhart whipped Jannetty into the ropes, but the Rocker held onto the coils for dear life. Less than a minute later, the same motions took place; however, as before... another stalemate. Looking to gain the upper hand, Marty slid between "the Anvil's" legs and whipped him into the corner. The lightning Rocker then followed up with a cross body block, but got caught in midair and crashed to his back by his much larger opponent.

After Jannetty kicked out of a quick Neidhart cover, he tagged in his partner Michaels, as "the Anvil" reached for Bret.

Here they were, October 30, 1990, standing face-to-face in the ring—Shawn and Bret for the first time. After sizing up the young Texan, Bret whipped Shawn into the corner and gave him a backbreaker Russian leg sweep combination, which to this day the Hit Man uses as a set-up for his Sharpshooter. Looking to put the rookie away early, Bret went for two quick covers, then became enraged at the referee for what he called two "slow counts". Shawn quickly bailed out of harm's way and tagged Marty back in. Bret retaliated the move by immediately nailing Jannetty with a sunset flip, but the thinking Rocker simply sat on Bret and grabbed his legs for the pin. Hitting the ring just a moment too late, there was nothing "the Anvil" could do. Score the first fall to the Rockers.

As Bret and Marty restarted the match, it became apparent to the fans in attendance that the ring ropes appeared looser than normal. However, after pointing it out to the referee, the zebra apparently saw no harm in the situation and let the match continue. When "the Anvil" tagged in following the restart, you could easily see that the ropes were limp and therefore couldn't support much weight for a long period of time. Despite the concerns, both teams stayed focused on the match itself.

Getting back to the action... at the resounding of the bell, "the Anvil" wasted no time and began viciously pummeling Jannetty with a barrage of fists. After Marty was sent face-first into the turnbuckle, Shawn anxiously received the tag from his partner, as a stunned Jannetty took his turn on the apron. Once inside, the confident Texan went fist-for-fist with Neidhart; however, back on the outside, as Marty rested his weary body against the turnbuckle, one of the top ropes snapped completely off! While the steel cable dangled on the floor of Fort Wayne, Marty unwisely tagged back in and was met with a crippling elbow by a fresh Hit Man. As Bret went for the quick pin, Shawn pulled Hart up by the hair and drop-kicked him over the top rope. Concerned that his partner might be counted out, Neidhart rolled Bret back up on the apron. Attempting to suplex his foe back in, Michaels was caught by the crafty Bret who reversed the move and buried the Rocker with a backdrop. Too weakened to help, Marty could only watch as Bret pinned Shawn, following the Foundation's trademark "Hart Attack". Fall number two—Hart Foundation.

After the fall, Federation officials stopped the match momentarily to repair the broken ring rope. This break allowed the match to resume on an even field with both teams well rested and ready to go. BUT, only a few minutes back into action, the ropes once again became loose.

With the falls now at one a piece, both teams began pulling out all the stops. Out of the shoot, Bret quickly gave Shawn two thundering uppercuts to the gut that winded the stunned youngster. Not taking any chances, Shawn tagged in Marty who was met by a waiting Hart double-team.

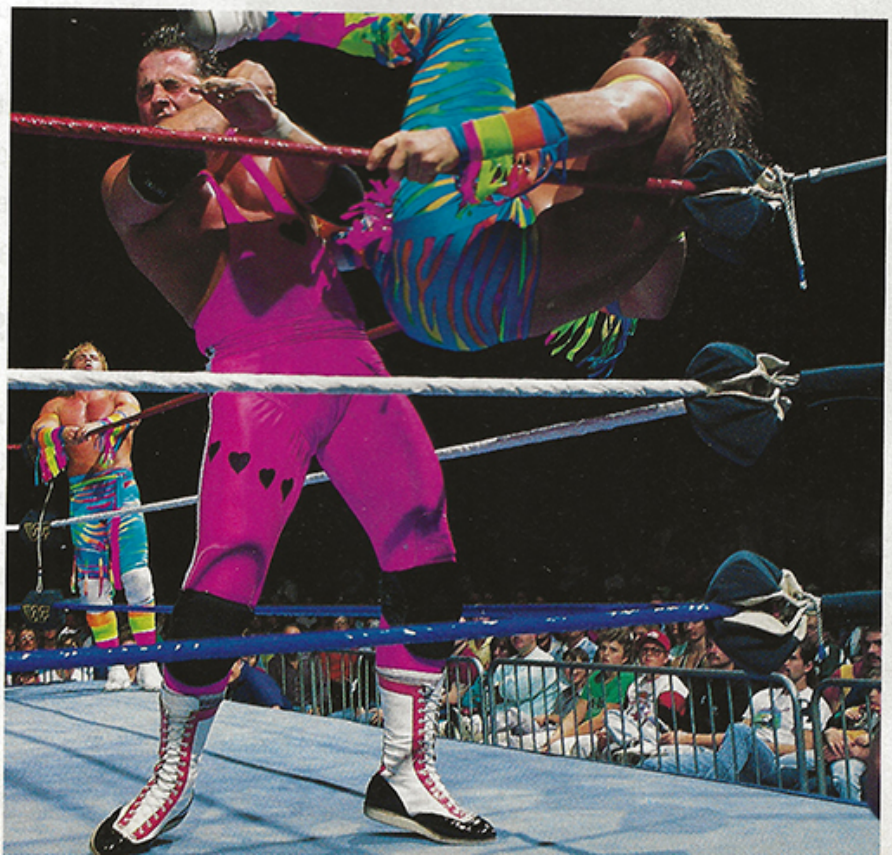
(Left) Jannetty and Michaels nail Neidhart with a double dropkick, while moments later they drop the Hit Man (right), courtesy of a double clothesline. (Bottom) As Bret closes in for the kill, Jannetty lifts his knees and throws a thunderous kick at Hart.

As Neidhart went for a quick pin, Shawn was once again forced to collect his bearings and save his partner from the loss.

As the referee forced Shawn back to his corner, Bret scaled the ropes and waited for "the Anvil" to slam him on top of Jannetty. However, the Rocker raised his legs at the last moment and Bret had nothing but knees planted in his abdomen. Seeing an opportunity, Michaels ran back in to help Jannetty, but was abruptly dumped to the arena floor by a waiting Neidhart. With Michaels disposed of on the outside, the Foundation once again went for the win with the "Hart Attack". Just as Bret was about to connect with a clothesline, Shawn jumped up on the apron and delivered a flying dropkick into his partner's back! The force of the blow propelled Marty on top of Neidhart for the pin, and Shawn wisely tackled the Hit Man so he couldn't disrupt the count.

As soon as the referee's hand hit for the third time, the crowd roared to life. Shawn and Marty took the straps—in utter disbelief—and held them high above their heads. After the Foundation realized what had just happened, they grudgingly shook hands with the new champs and congratulated them. However, not once did Bret shake Shawn's hand after the match. Whether Bret will admit it today or not, he still remembers how Shawn tried to rob him and his partner of the Tag Team Title that night.

Unfortunately for the new champs, just hours after the upset, Federation officials were forced—because of the freak mishap with the top rope—to strip the Rockers of the belts and hand them back to the Hart Foundation. They ruled that since the ring wasn't in the proper condition for two teams to be competing in, the match was null and void. It never aired on television and no mention of the change was ever made. However, for a few short hours, the Rockers were the champions. Not only did the belts ALMOST change hands that night, but the seeds of hatred between the Heartbreak Kid and the Hit Man were cultivated. ■

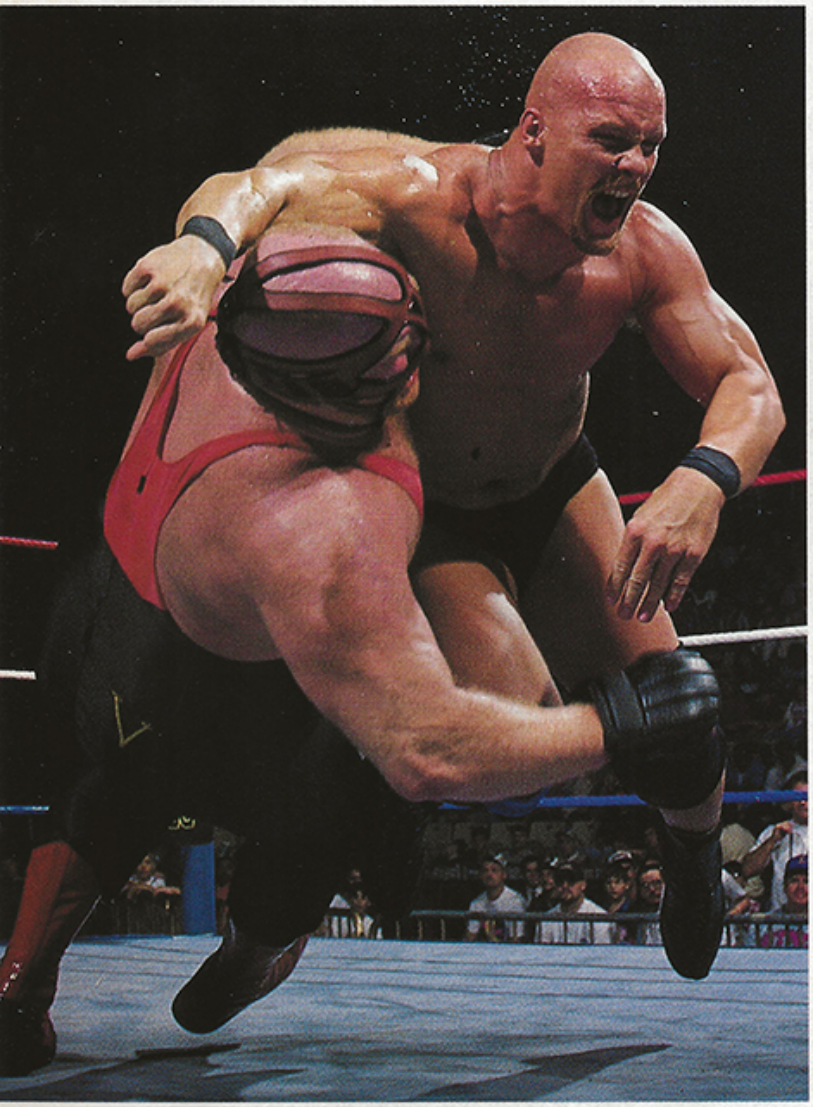


FANTASY WARFARE

BY LOU GIANFRIDDO

Stan Hansen vs. Stone Cold Steve Austin

In the 1970s, the World Wrestling Federation was under siege by a mountainous Texan who answered to the name Stan "The Lariat" Hansen. He was a huge man—standing nearly six feet, five inches tall and weighing more than 320 pounds—and he was just as brutal as he was big. He was ruthless, often mowing down the competition with such ease and finality that Federation promoters at the time began to wonder if any superstar could beat him. To that end, promoters signed a match between then-Champion Bruno Sammartino and the rugged ruffian from Borger, Texas. The result was shocking—Hansen won the belt and broke Sammartino's neck with a Lariat clothesline in the process, an incident that still festers like a cancer in the memories of all who observed it.



Hansen's 1990s version of himself is Stone Cold Steve Austin. Although Austin isn't as massive as Hansen, he is every bit as, if not more, brutal. Austin's track record speaks for itself. He has injured scores of superstars, among them the most talented athletes in the Federation, including Bret "Hit Man" Hart and Brian Pillman, the latter of whom is still convalescing with torn knee and foot ligaments.

What would happen if these two temperamental and violent athletes were to collide? That's an interesting question—one that will most likely remain unanswered. However, here's how they match up on a point-by-point basis:

STONE COLD STEVE AUSTIN

STRENGTHS:

In a word, "tenacity". Austin is one of the most tenacious athletes ever to step between the ropes in the World Wrestling Federation. He is a man who doesn't understand, nor care to learn, about surrender. His basic instinct is based on survival at all costs and to him, that means doing whatever it takes. If it means slamming a chair into an opponent's back while his back is turned... so be it. Another trait that fortifies Austin as a wrestler is his sound wrestling knowledge. When he elects to

be, Austin is as fine a wrestler as any—living, dead or undead. He can match any wrestler alive move for move and is extremely adept at defensive wrestling—a skill that has been all but forgotten among the up-and-coming generation of superstars.

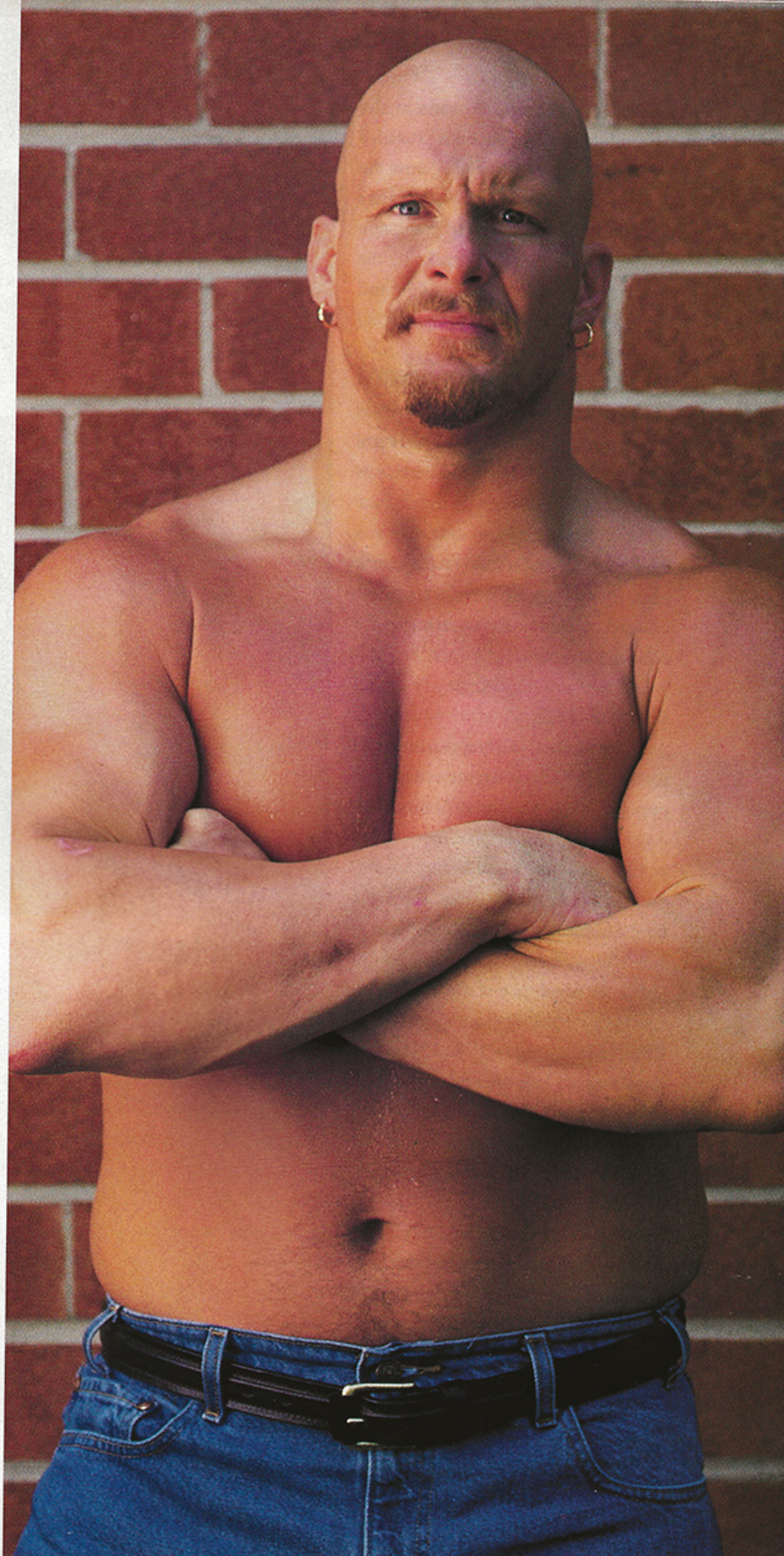
WEAKNESSES:

Austin's emotions often interfere with his matches. Consumed with a desire to cripple his opponents, Austin frequently winds up a loser, via a disqualification. His temper also seems to get the better of him. He has been known to use his finisher, the Stone Cold Stunner, on referees. He is not beyond assaulting Federation officials whenever he feels they have somehow wronged him. Thus, although he is dangerous to everyone, he is perhaps a danger to his career in terms of victories and losses on his wrestling ledger.

KEY WINS:

Austin has amassed an impressive string of victories since he stormed into the Federation last year. In the singles ranks, he has deposed one world-class contender after another with the Stone Cold Stunner reverse neckbreaker. Austin 3:16, as he likes to call himself, has also done well in other areas of Federation combat. At last year's *King of the Ring* tournament, Austin overcame such stellar superstars as Wildman Marc Mero and Jake "The Snake" Roberts. At this year's *Royal Rumble*,

(Left) Stone Cold Steve Austin has made it clear that he will do anything to attain the attention he deserves in the World Wrestling Federation. Here he viciously goes at it with the man they call Vader during February's *In Your House* Final Four match. (Right) Austin 3:16? You bet your ASS!!!



Austin—before 60,000 fans at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas—wrestled for over an hour against the Federation's finest stars as well as stars from the Triple A wrestling promotion in Mexico. He survived attacks by the Undertaker, Bret Hart, Vader and Mankind and managed to conquer all.

KEY LOSSES:

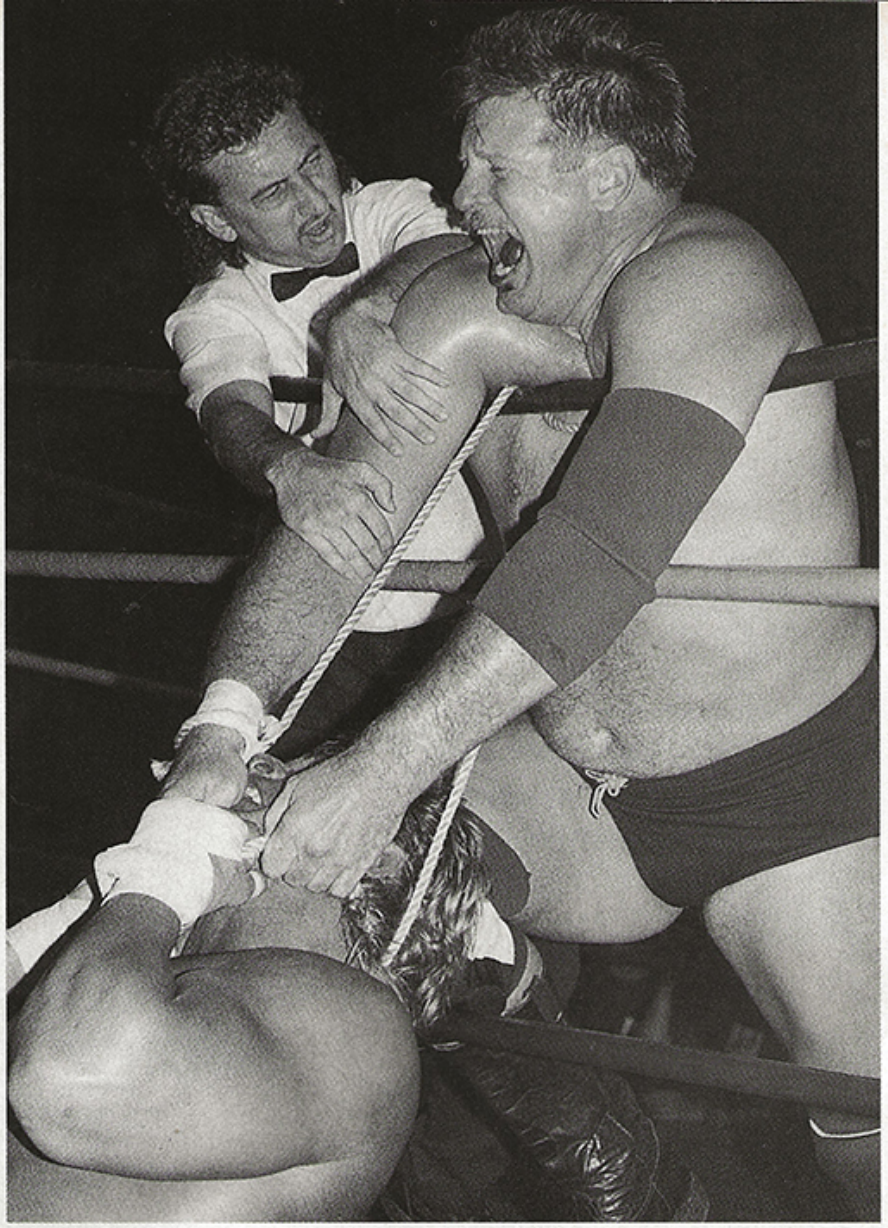
One of Austin's biggest defeats to date has been at the hands of Bret "Hit Man" Hart at the 1996 *Survivor Series*. Their match was one of the most memorable in recent years, with both men taking it to each other in a form so raw that it bordered on the surreal. Although Austin was beaten, he has recovered and managed to mount an impressive comeback since then.

FINISHING MOVE:

Austin's Stone Cold Stunner has been the bane of every wrestler who has opposed him. This modified reverse neckbreaker jars the opposition's spinal column in a way never before experienced. Like Hansen's Lariat, the Stone Cold Stunner has potentially debilitating side effects, most often in the form of dislocated vertebrae and slipped discs.

STRATEGY:

For Austin to beat Hansen, Stone Cold would have to be more brutal than he is at present. He would have to take the fight to Hansen, throwing everything at him including—but perhaps not restricted to—the proverbial kitchen sink. Realistically, Austin's best bet would be to injure Hansen's legs and then open up with a punishing attack once the bigger man hit the mat. If Austin could accomplish such a feat then—given his tenacity and his penchant for brutality—a win would more than likely be achieved.



STAN "THE LARIAT" HANSEN

STRENGTHS:

In his day, Hansen was considered to be one of the biggest men ever to compete in the World Wrestling Federation. Unlike other big men who came later, such as Hulk Hogan, Hansen knew how to use his incredible size to his advantage. Although massive, he was incredibly agile and able to execute moves that men half his size wouldn't even dare to try. Moreover, Hansen was well rounded in technical terms. His wrestling abilities, in fact, were the subject of much adulation in Japan, where fans judge wrestling generalship with close scrutiny. These attributes have helped Hansen beat some of the finest Japanese wrestlers of all time. He even held several world titles during his competitive career in the Far East.

WEAKNESSES:

Hansen, like Austin today, enjoyed punishing the competition too much—so much so that it often resulted in numerous disqualifications during his

(Above) Stan "The Lariat" Hansen was known to use anything he could get his hands on, if it would help him cripple an opponent. (Right) Talk about attitude? Even though Hansen's language wasn't as salty as Austin's, his attitude was, as he would put it, "bigger than the state of Texas!!!"

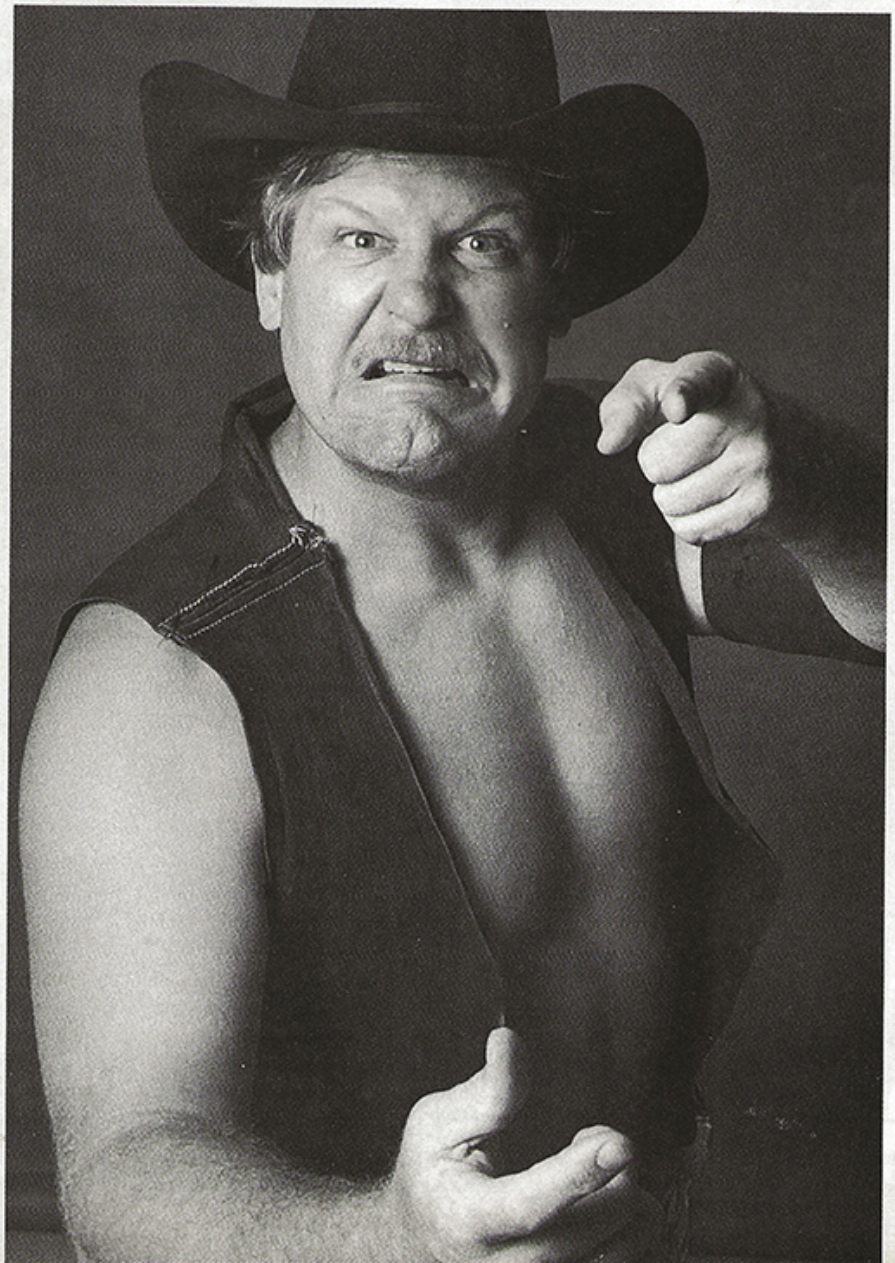
career in the Federation. Hansen took deep pleasure in watching an opponent suffer in his clutches. Even if a victory was within a hair's breadth of attainment, Hansen wouldn't seize the moment until he felt that his foe had been amply crushed to the point of near paralysis. Of course, this type of sportsmanship didn't wash with Federation officials then, as it surely doesn't today.

KEY WINS:

Stan Hansen has beaten some of the greatest athletes from the Federation's rich and interesting past. Some of the men who have fallen before him include Domenic DeNucci, Pedro Morales—a former Federation Champion—and Sonny King. His most memorable victory, based strictly on the carnage that resulted, was his win over Bruno Sammartino at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Hansen won the match when he broke Bruno's neck with the Lariat clothesline. Sammartino subsequently spent several weeks in the hospital, vowing all along that he would "get even with Hansen if it was the last thing he did."

KEY LOSSES:

Bruno was true to his word. After months of physical therapy and training, Sammartino returned to New York and beat Hansen in what was then a match of epic proportions. It was a major setback for Hansen who had been steamrolling over the cream of the Federation's talent list. Some insiders say that Hansen never learned to cope with the loss, especially since the Texan believed Sammartino was inferior to him in every facet of ring warfare.



FINISHING MOVE:

Hansen's Lariat clothesline has been imitated by almost every man who's broken into the business. But none have duplicated or perfected it as Hansen did. He knew precisely where to strike with the tactic, thus maximizing the most damage to the human anatomy. Hansen often wore an elbow brace around the arm with which he executed the Lariat. His detractors, and even some Federation officials, speculated that Hansen often "loaded" the elbow brace with foreign objects, such as steel plates and razor wire, although that has never been confirmed.

STRATEGY:

If Hansen was to meet Austin, Hansen would have to brandish all his weapons. He would have to hurt Austin in a way that he's never hurt anyone, especially as it is well-documented fact that Austin can take tremendous amounts of punishment and has a high threshold for pain. Hansen would also have to utilize "the old school" methods, as they are known in the business. He would have to use techniques that have since been abandoned in order to overcome the challenge of Austin. If he's successful, not even Stone Cold—or any other current superstar for that matter—would be able to survive a match with the bad man from Borger, Texas—Stan Hansen. ■

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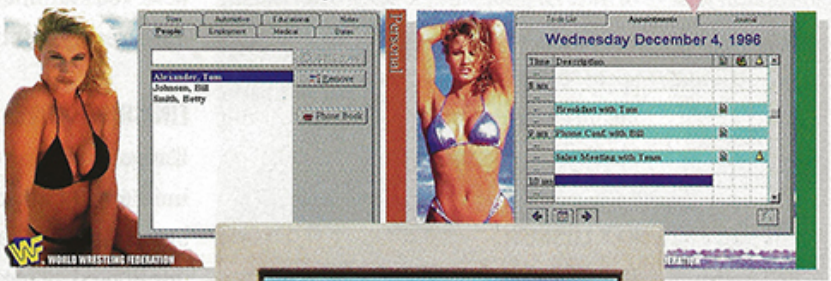

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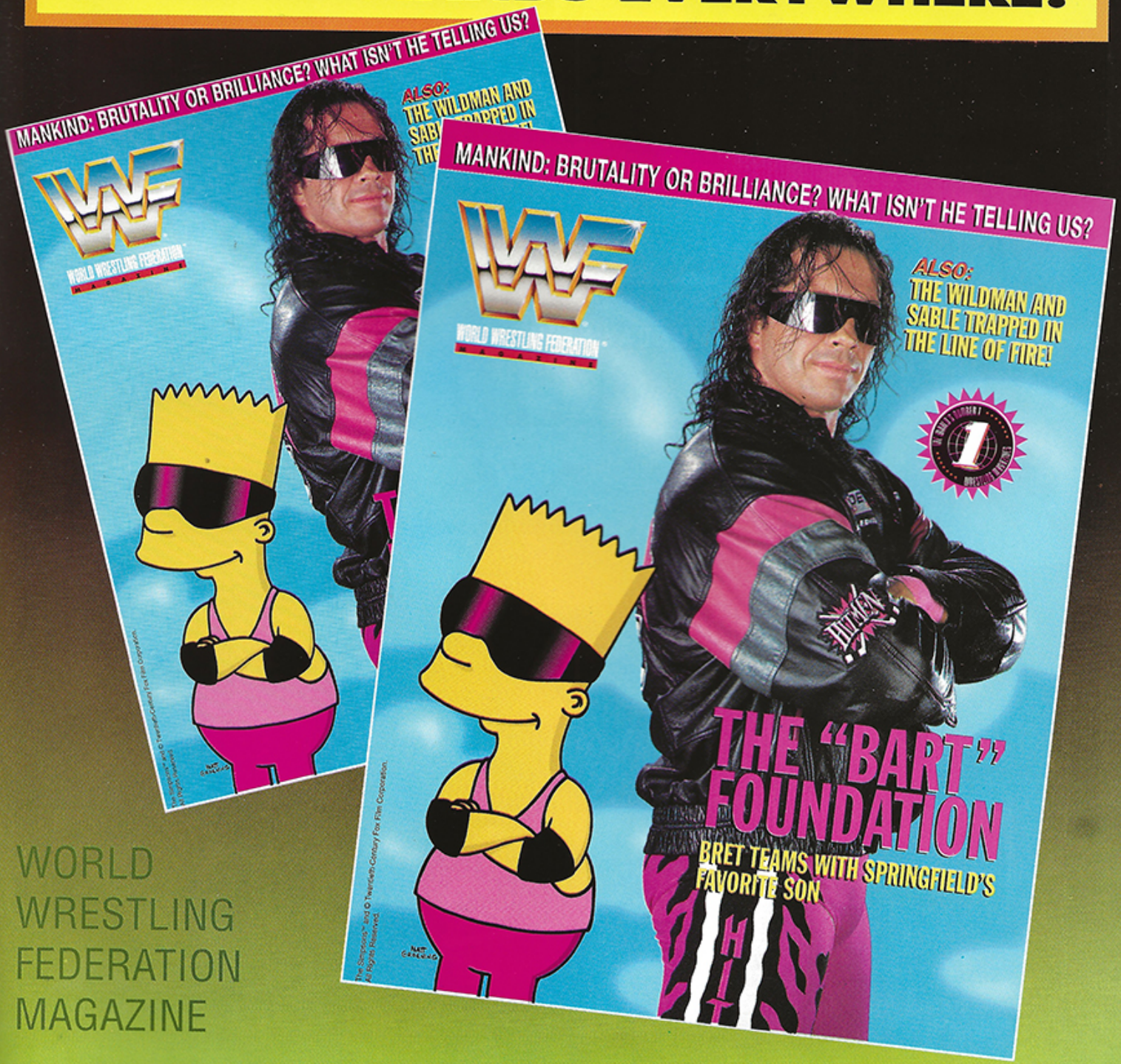

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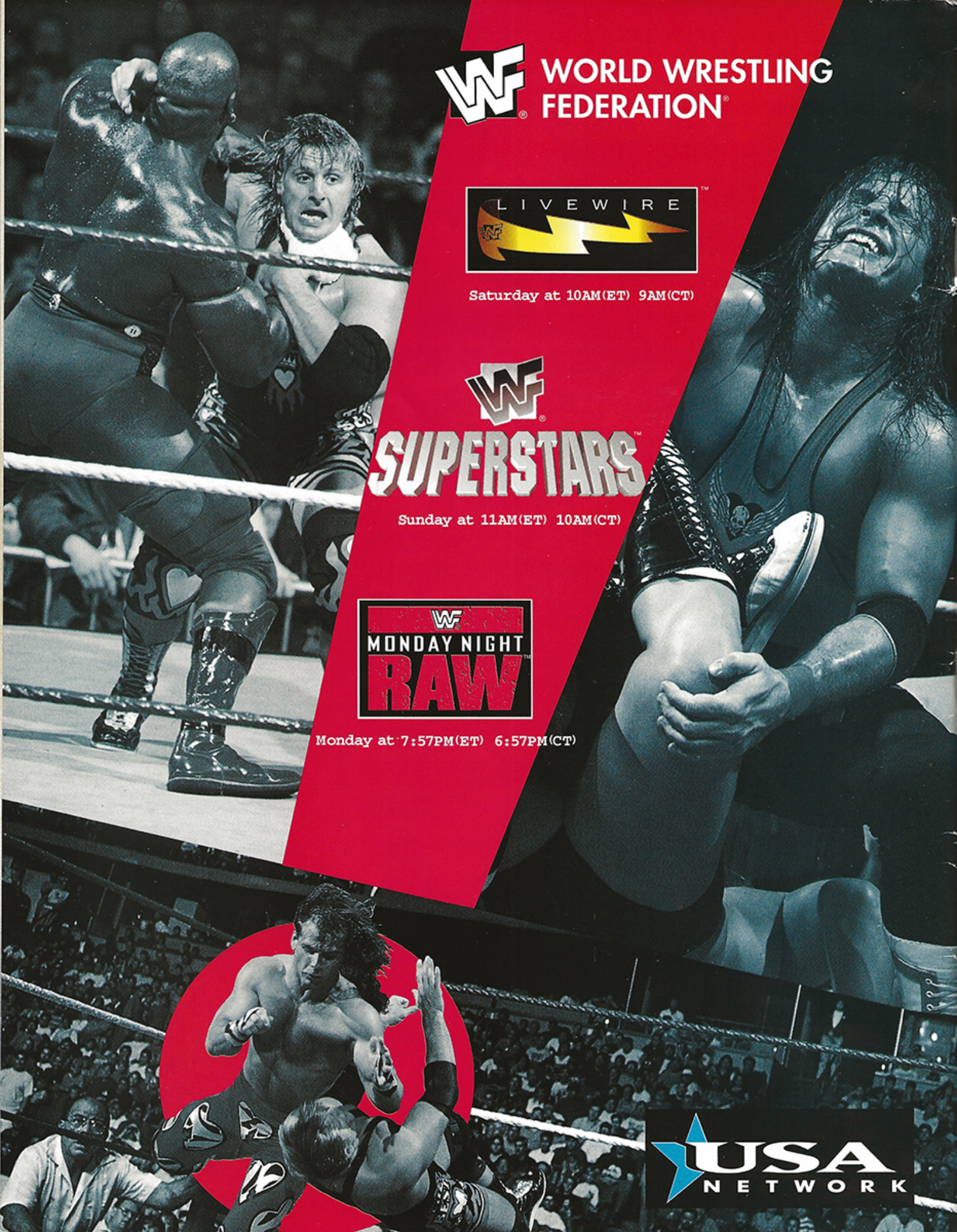
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